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CLUB-LAND OF THE TOILER.

CLUB-LAND OF THE TOILER

*EXEMPLIFIED BY THE WORKMEN'S CLUB AND
INSTITUTE UNION*

BY

T. S. PEPPIN, B.A.

WITH A PREFACE BY

CANON BARNETT



LONDON

J. M. DENT & CO.

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N O T E.

My very cordial thanks are due to Mr B. T. Hall, Secretary of the Workmen's Club and Institute Union, and to Mr J. J. Dent, the late Secretary of the same, for help and information which have been most valuable to me in the preparation of this little work.

T. S. PEPPIN.

P R E F A C E.

THE Life and Leisure of London offers a problem as difficult as that of the Life and Work which Charles Booth is doing so much to solve—How do people who have no work to do spend the long hours of the day? How much time goes in lounging—how much is killed? How do workmen spend the leisure they gain with shorter hours of labour? What do members of the building trades do when they knock off work at four or five o'clock in the afternoon? What sorts of pleasure and recreation are possible, what are those they actually enjoy?

The problem is obviously full of difficulty, but its solution would throw light on a path in which we are feeling our way. If it were known how the rich who have no employment spend their wealth, it would be easier to decide whether the common good demands more or less taxation of that wealth. Perhaps, too, the analysis of the time spent on dressing, eating, lounging, or in frivolities of reading, playing, and sight-seeing would rouse some who are guilty to a more useful life in a society which cries out with the hundred voices of suffering and sorrow for others' service. If, on the other hand, it were known how the workmen use the leisure they have gained—the knowledge of the hours spent in sleep, in public-houses, in unskilled games, in seeking for excitement, would both hurry the movement for making more leisure, and also make it clear that other means of pleasure must be provided. Perhaps, too, the revelation

of the number of hours spent aimlessly and vainly in athletics, in gambling, in swaggering show, would stir some young workmen to more efforts at self-improvement, and to a more generous use of their money and time. The problem, however, has not yet been attempted, and no one knows how the leisure of London is spent. Mr Peppin in the following pages offers a small contribution. He describes the workman's club in which he tells us 34,000 men take their leisure.

Mr Peppin speaks with the authority of a man who has himself lived for some years in the midst of the clubland of which he speaks ; he knows the "feel" of a working class district, the depression of its monotonous streets, the dull grey of its atmosphere. He, as their neighbour, has learnt something of the thoughts which lurk behind words, and are not easily caught, either by kindly visitors or clever special correspondents. He, himself, has been for some years both a member and almost a nightly frequenter of these clubs, going in and out among the members as a mate and a friend.

Readers may be warned that they must not judge clubs as if they were missions, or in any way reforming agencies. Clubs have been developed by workmen to provide for themselves means of relaxation. As Mr Peppin says, no one asks of a West End Club—"Does it promote sobriety?" "Does it raise the tone of its members?" A club in the east or in the west is simply the outcome of the needs of the society around, and as such affords an insight into the life of that society.

Workmen's clubs are very expressive of working-class thought and feeling. They are not exclusively formed of Unionists and Friendly Society men ; many of the members are neither one nor the other. The clubs are thus representative of that large body which will not fall into line with either of these organisations. Working-class thought is often sought among Unionists or friendly societies. It is not discovered if account be not also taken

of those outside their bodies. Unionists and friendly society men may be the *elite* of the class, but a class is not to be understood only by its *elite*.

A club with its entertainments, its lectures, its library, its games, may thus be taken as illustrative of the sort of pleasure which workmen demand and enjoy. A description of Club-land shows how a large class of the community uses its leisure.

There are many questions which come into prominence under even the small ray of light thrown by this book. "Ought clubs to be registered under certain restrictions as to accommodation and hours of opening?"

A requirement that the buildings should be substantial and clean, that the bar and lecture-room or reading-room should be separate, that a body of shareholders and not a brewer be responsible for the capital, would be acceptable to long and firmly established clubs, but might bear hardly on those struggling into existence. And any rule which bears hardly on natural development is ill advised. Clubs are means of recreation, provided by the people for the people. They will improve as tastes improve, and it is in making the improvements that better tastes will be established.

Another question which is raised is, "Ought not elementary education to have a higher aim?"

"If club lectures, entertainment, talk, opinion, represent the result of twenty-five years' working of the Education Act, is not something more required?" A very limited enquiry shows that there is little organised teaching of a higher sort attractive to man. The University Extension Society is so inadequately supported that its lectures are rare. At the same time, it is equally clear that there is little demand for the teaching which would furnish the memory with facts of great deeds and great men, and stimulate the imagination to shape a future fit for the life of generous people. Boys leave school as prisoners leave a prison. They are glad of

release from restraint, of freedom from the drudgery. School life is as a rule not made attractive, the natural curiosity of the intellect has not been aroused, nor the more generous emotions stirred. The aim, indeed, of the school is to prepare the children for work, and there has been little thought of preparing them for leisure. It is no wonder, therefore, that the recreation they provide for themselves in clubs is so poor, that the members are condemned to such surroundings, and have so few subjects of conversation. The question as to the need of higher education may be, perhaps, satisfied, if attendance at a night continuation school were enforced till the age of sixteen. It might be required of employers using those young people to get a certificate of such attendance.

Other questions will occur to readers of this book as to the need of temperance legislation, and the better provision of baths and libraries, but the impression left on me is, I confess, one to encourage hope.

The existence of clubs is a sign of life, of the demand of men for society and of their power to provide it for themselves. The growth of some of the clubs and the way in which they have raised buildings and started libraries is full of promise of what others may do. The moving in some clubs of the citizen spirit, which has led to children's parties and political action, has made them the centre of activity in many deadened districts. The increased power of the Club Union in making a public opinion against drinking habits and in favour of public service, is a promise that the tendency is upwards.

The danger of clubs is the common danger of the time—that which arises from class feeling. Clubs in which workmen associate with none but workmen, in which interests are all the same, in which education and experience are limited within comparatively narrow limits, must be in the large sense anti-social. Class clubs, whether they are in Pall Mall or Bethnal Green, hardly consider the

needs of others, or grasp the whole of the society of which they are parts. They breed class jealousies and antagonisms. They are dangerous.

It may be a distant hope, but for myself, I dare to look for the time when the East End will lose its reproach for dirt and meanness, when it will be as pleasant for habitation, as healthy, as quiet as any part of London.

In those days people who have won more leisure will not be in a hurry to move from their old neighbourhood. They will remain in East London, keep up their club membership, and by their wider interests increase its power to recreate its members and serve others.

Meantime, it is good of those who have had the gift of education to choose as their club a workmen's club, and by making friends among the poor deepen their own hearts while they widen others' heads.

SAMUEL A. BARNETT.

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THE CLUB - LAND OF THE TOILER.

CHAPTER I.

THE CLUB AND INSTITUTE UNION.

IN an age like the present, having as one of its main characteristics the development of the Labour Movement, it is interesting to notice anything which has an apparently opposite tendency.

The organisation of Labour is one of the most prominent social evolutions of the day ; it has occupied, and is occupying, the attention of thinkers and writers, philanthropists, politicians, and clergy. The expression "Labour Party" has become hackneyed. Representatives of Labour sit in the House of Commons ; an English Prime Minister has not only avowed his sympathy with this movement, but has actually associated himself with the cause by becoming a member of one of our most prominent and democratic institutions.

Even to refer to such matters is to run the risk of being regarded as behind the times. These things are taken for granted ; their growth and development are matters of practical politics.

It is necessary, however, to draw attention to two points in connection with the Labour Movement.

The movement, of course, has been one of emancipation for the industrial classes. The workman has discovered a new faculty in the power of organisation. He has be-

come an active and interested member of the State, and he knows it; if you ask him for his credentials, he can and will point you to a hundred associations and institutions which are largely his own handiwork, and the result of his own forethought.

The second point is connected with the aim of the Labour Movement. Its aim is undoubtedly to improve the condition of the industrial classes, and by that we usually mean to secure for them better wages and more leisure, thus giving them the opportunities for self-development, and a more happy and complete existence.

Now, this second point has a special significance of its own, for the question to be dealt with is that of the proper employment of leisure, and the "Leisure Problem" at once forces itself upon our attention. It would be premature in this context to expatiate at any length upon this side of the question; all we would do is to draw attention to the fact that the Club Movement has its own special bearing upon two most important matters which have been brought into prominence by the Labour Movement—the Power of Organisation and the Leisure Problem.

The Club Movement affords a striking illustration of that faculty for organisation which has been created and fostered in the industrial classes during the developments of the Labour Movement.

In the Clerkenwell Road, close to the Holborn Town Hall, there is a spacious building. The gas lamp over the door bears the inscription, *Working Men's Club and Institute Union, Ltd.*

On entering this building we find the offices which would naturally belong to the head-quarters of a great organisation. We find the secretary and his assistants, and other functionaries. We find ourselves in the head-quarters of a Society which is responsible for the existence or good management of hundreds of Working Men's Clubs in London and the provinces.

Hither have been sent, and are still being sent, deputations from localities where the design of forming a Workman's Club has been formed. These walls contain a vast body of doctrine, the accumulation of thirty years' experience in the formation and management of such Clubs. Advice and assistance are given for nothing. If the Club so formed is successfully conducted, its usual ambition is to be enrolled as an affiliated member of the Club and Institute Union. This distinction can be conferred if the visitors appointed from head-quarters to scrutinize the condition of the new institution bring back a favourable report to the committee that holds session in the building in the Clerkenwell Road.

Affiliation with the Club and Institute Union presents many advantages which a newly-formed Club can ill afford to dispense with. Instead of being a solitary and isolated institution, the fact of its affiliation makes it a member of a vast institution, and confers upon its members possibilities of social intercourse which they would otherwise lack, for the doors of all Clubs associated to the Union are open to *all* members of all the Clubs so associated, and the possibilities of common effort and corporate enterprise are thus vouchsafed to a very extensive public. Again, in cases of dispute or difficulty, a Club can be saved from a condition of anarchy or possible collapse by an appeal to head-quarters, which may result in the matter being quietly settled by arbitration.

The faculty of self-government is also encouraged and developed by affiliation to the Club and Institute Union. Delegates sent from each club so affiliated meet at stated intervals to discuss matters, and to legislate for the Union as a whole; and matters of vital importance involving the entire institution are thus debated and arranged on the principle of representative government.

But in order that a clear comprehension of this institution may be possible, we append an extract from the

thirty-second Annual Report, which gives a very clear statement as to the scope and functions of this great organisation.

“THE WORKING MEN’S CLUB AND INSTITUTE UNION,
LIMITED.

ESTABLISHED JUNE 14TH, 1862.

REGISTERED APRIL 18TH, 1889.

*Awarded—A Gold Medal, Amsterdam Exhibition, 1869.
A Grand Prize, Paris Exhibition, 1889.*

“WHAT IS IT ?

“It is a Union of more than FOUR HUNDRED Working Men’s Clubs and Associations* spread all over the country, and although these Clubs represent all phases of thought, the Union itself is neutral in questions of religion and politics.

“It is supported by the fees paid by these Clubs, and by profits arising from the sale of books, publications, &c.

“It is managed by representatives elected by its members—every member having the right to one or more representatives, in proportion to the number of its own members.

“WHAT DOES IT DO ?

“It issues to its members associate and pass cards, which give the holder the privilege of honorary membership of the other Clubs of the Union in all parts of the country.

“It organises contests, and offers trophies and prizes for athletics, billiards, chess, cricket, cribbage, draughts, football, rifle-shooting, rowing, swimming, angling, whist, and various other sports and pastimes.

“It owns and supports at Pegwell Bay a splendid Convalescent Home for the use of Club members holding

* Certain Co-operative Societies are affiliated, and are not asked for returns.

the Union associate and pass cards. The rules and regulations can be obtained of the Secretary.

"It gives free legal advice to its members, and acts when desired as a Board of Arbitration upon all questions connected with their management.

"It gives advice to all who ask for it, and issues publications as to the best method of starting and managing Clubs, and sends speakers to address meetings in support of the establishment of these institutions.

"It gives free instruction in account keeping to the secretaries of Union Clubs, and undertakes to examine and report upon the accounts and financial position of any Club which desires it to do so.

"It has arranged a system of account keeping for Clubs, and supplies at very low prices all the books and forms required for properly conducting a Club.

"It has a Circulating Library of over 4000 vols., from which it lends to its members—on payment of carriage only—boxes of thirty books, which may be exchanged every three months.

"It has a Reference Library of over 2000 vols., any of which are lent free of charge for six weeks to any member applying for them.

"It holds examinations and offers prizes for debating, essay writing, and for knowledge of history, political economy, and social questions.

"It arranges Saturday afternoon visits, under the guidance of eminent men, to various places of interest in and around London.

"It issues a monthly journal, free to all its affiliated Clubs, as a channel for the interchange of Club opinion, and record of progress.

"It organises periodically an Industrial Exhibition of work done by members of Clubs and their families, and offers a large number of valuable prizes and certificates.

"It lends free of charge to any member forming an Ambulance Class, a stretcher, diagrams, and all necessary

apparatus for conducting the class, and when possible provides for Metropolitan Clubs voluntary teaching by duly qualified medical men.

"It gives assistance to Clubs in arranging reading parties by lending books, and offers prizes to Clubs showing the best work in this direction.

"It is in connection with the Working Men's College, and with its help undertakes to provide qualified teachers at a merely nominal fee for any subjects, for the study of which a class may be formed by a Metropolitan member.

"It lends free to members forming Science or Technical Classes all the text books required for the use of the students, and maps, diagrams, globes, &c.

"It offers to members for competition, scholarships at various educational institutions in London, and other prizes.

"It lends to its members at a small charge, magic lanterns, dissolving view apparatus, and slides, for lectures and entertainments.

"Finally, it watches over the interests of the Club and Institute movement generally, using its influence wherever possible to obtain new privileges, and defending, when necessary, any encroachment upon those already obtained.

"Membership of the Union is recognised by the authorities as a guarantee of the *bond fides* of a Club, and it is therefore to the interest of all genuine Clubs to join this important organisation.

"HOW TO JOIN THE UNION.

"A Club or Society desiring to join the Union must fill in the form of application for admission as a member, applying for one 5s. share for each hundred or part of one hundred members on its books, but in no case need more than four shares be applied for. When admitted it must pay, in January,

"An annual fee to the Union of 5s.

per hundred or part of one hundred members on its books, but in no case is a Club required to pay more than £1 per year. No further liability is incurred.

"Forms of application for membership and further information can be obtained on application to

"THE SECRETARY,

"CLUB UNION BUILDINGS, CLERKENWELL ROAD, E.C."

Benefits such as those set down in the above extract are not lightly to be cast aside or ignored, nor is there a Club affiliated to the Union that would willingly resign its claim to such advantages.

The danger of expulsion from the Union through carelessness, bad conduct, or infringement of the laws, to which all its members are subject, is a potent factor in preserving careful management and salutary discipline throughout these clubs as a whole.

The benefits alluded to above must not blind us to what is perhaps the greatest boon of all. The sense of corporate action and common effort is, perhaps, the most important and far-reaching result of such an institution as this, and it is easy to see how this is bound up with that capacity for organisation and independent effort which has been so strikingly evident among the industrial classes of late years.

This brings us to the second point. How far does this great organisation of Workmen's Clubs help us to solve the ethically more difficult social problem affecting the future of the industrial classes? To how great an extent can the Club Movement be regarded as having succeeded in the task of promoting a proper employment of the leisure hours of the industrial classes?

Most people who are acquainted with the conditions of Labour in London and the great provincial towns are in agreement as to the necessity of securing a higher stan-

dard of living for the majority of the workers. "They should be better educated, they should have more advantages." These are vague phrases which express the ideas of the humanitarian. There exists, however, a class of objectors. They also have their current phrases about the matter. They say, "Give the working man more money, and he will spend more in drink ; give him more leisure, and he will have more opportunity for abusing it than he has now."

This latter view of the question, crude and unsatisfactory as it is, cannot be ignored. There is an ugly kernel of truth implied in it and it serves to bring into the foreground that puzzle which has been racking people's brains since the dawn of history, and which simply amounts to this, How are people to be made better? That question, however (if asked), must be answered from the point of view of the modern inquirer. We must examine the means at our disposal and answer accordingly. Above all we must be careful to avoid final condemnation when we find that a certain method employed has resulted in comparative failure.

It is idle to shirk facts. Everybody knows that there is no panacea for evil. Looked at from one point of view, we may say that all efforts, that all institutions, have met with comparative failure in this unequal conflict. Religion, art, education, and all the institutions connected therewith have done what they could do, but the grim fact still remains—working men, like their more fortunate brothers, are apt to waste their money and to abuse their leisure.

It is, however, interesting to notice that, while so much time and thought has been spent, with such substantial results, upon the organisation of Labour, "The Leisure Problem" has been directly dealt with for something like only thirty years ; and it is interesting to notice to how great an extent clubs and the club movement have been called into requisition in dealing with this great problem.

There are, of course, other means of grace employed : Evening Classes, Mutual Improvement Societies, Penny Readings, etc., but the club has been more common, more attractive, and more effective. University settlements in London and other places tell the same tale. They have evening classes and lectures in abundance, which are usually patronised by the better sort. They have also their club or clubs, the main object of which is to ensure the proper employment of leisure for those who as a rule do not figure greatly in educational endeavour. It would not be too much to say that the Club and Institute Union owes its existence to a like impulse.

One thing then that the Labour Movement has brought into prominence is the Leisure Problem, and it is impossible to dissociate this from the Club Movement.

Now it is, of course, obvious that a club cannot be regarded in any special sense as a means of salvation to anybody. No wealthy Londoner who joins a club in the West End is from that moment regarded by his friends as a saved soul, nor, on the other hand, have we any right to assume that the East End workman joins his club with any specially exalted purpose, or that any spiritual regeneration necessarily results from his having done so.

Nevertheless, one frequently hears workmen's clubs condemned on that ground, and on that ground solely—a condemnation which would apply just as consistently to a railway engine because it fails to tell us the time of day.

But though a club cannot be regarded as a means of salvation, yet, on the other hand, it provides the workman with great opportunities. In the first place, if he belongs to a club he has no excuse for spending his evenings in the public-house. Before the establishment of workmen's clubs the public-house was the only place where a man could go to see his friends. If he spent much time there public-house etiquette almost compelled him to drink too much. He had to drink "for the good of the house."

In other words, social intercourse amongst workmen was a direct incentive to vice. Social intercourse without this incentive has been rendered possible by the Club Movement.

Again, in a workman's club there is usually a library, and newspapers are always to be found in the reading room. A fact connected with the early history of the Club and Institute Union has an interesting significance in this connection. Great difficulty was encountered in forming village clubs owing to the opposition of the farmers, who feared that opportunities for discussion and the reading of newspapers might awaken in the labourer an inconvenient desire to better himself.

Again, in many clubs lectures are organised and classes held ; athletics are encouraged, and associations maintained with other useful organisations.

It is easy, then, to see how the "Leisure Problem" is affected by these institutions ; but, at the same time, we must be careful not to regard a club as anything more than an institution which supplies men with the opportunities for social intercourse under morally innocuous conditions.

This point of view helps us to estimate the work done by these institutions in its proper and legitimate setting, and supplies us with a fair basis of criticism.

It remains now to trace the growth of this movement, and to form a judgment respecting its merits or demerits as a recognised factor in the "Leisure Problem."

CHAPTER II.

SOME DETAILS OF DEVELOPMENT.

(1863—1883.)

ON July 11th, 1863, was presented at Burlington House the first Annual Report of the Club and Institute Union. This unpretending little document tells us that the Union had been instrumental in establishing twenty-two* clubs. Several other clubs, however, had derived advice and assistance from the Union.

The Report itself occupies but four pages of print, one of which contains a long list of subscribers, another the balance sheet.

The second sentence of the Report is interesting, as it states the objects of the founders of the Union.

“The Council, in presenting their first Annual Report to the members of the Working Men’s Club and Institute Union, have to state that the Union has been formed for the purpose of helping working men to establish clubs or institutes where they can meet for conversation, business, and mental improvement, with the means of recreation and refreshment, free from the temptations of the public-house; these clubs at the same time constituting societies for mutual helpfulness in various ways.”

Then, further on, we are told the methods by which the objects of the Union are to be realised.

“1. By correspondence with friends of the movement,

* The Report in question says twenty-three, but a later Report refers to it as only twenty-two.

and with the officers of existing associations throughout the kingdom.

"2. By personal visits, by their own officers and by honorary deputations, to such places as might seem to require to be visited. At these visits conferences were to be held with the working classes, and with others in the locality who may be interested in the object.

"3. By the dissemination of tracts, or special papers, on subjects lying within the sphere of the Society's operations.

"4. By supplying instructions for the guidance of persons who might wish to establish clubs or institutes, together with rules to define their objects, and to regulate their proceedings.

"5. By grants or loans of books for club libraries, apparatus, diagrams, &c., to societies in membership with the Union, in cases where local circumstances might seem to call for such aid.

"6. By grants of money in special cases, by way of loan or otherwise, towards the building, enlarging, or altering club houses, or procuring recreation grounds for societies in the Union."

In 1863, then, we find a body of men, backed by a long list of subscribers, who have formed themselves into a Union for promoting the objects laid down in this Report. They have existed as a Union for a year, and have been at work for nine months, with the results described. They have their offices at 150 Strand, where their Secretary, the Rev. Henry Solly, has taken up his abode, and where he writes pamphlets, and organises propagandist meetings in London and the provinces. Lord Brougham is President of the Council, and peers, politicians, and clergy are to be found on the list of Vice-Presidents. Twenty-two Workmen's Clubs have been formed directly from the Union, and others have been assisted and encouraged from the same quarter.

So much for the first year.

The next four years are chiefly characterised by the propagandist work done in the provinces. Mr Solly was very diligent in this sphere of the work. The reports he presents to the Union are, however, somewhat vague. In the second Report, for instance, it is stated that fifty-five new clubs have been formed under the guidance and agency of the Union, but it is not stated what the exact connection is between these clubs and the Union; there is no process of affiliation mentioned, nor are we necessarily led to infer that the Club and Institute Union exercised any controlling force in the matter of their management and conduct.

The same criticism applies to the third Annual Report (1864-65). We are told that forty-one new clubs have been formed, that the total number of clubs is 116, that the population of these clubs amounts to about 30,000 men. But that is all.

The fourth Annual Report tells us that 125 new clubs have been formed during the year. This is a large number, but we are not told how many have collapsed meanwhile. The following is the passage dealing with this matter in the Report :—

“The number of these societies, either established or first made known to the Council during the past year, is much larger than at any previous period, being 125, as compared with 41 last year, 55 the year before, and 22 in the first year of the Society’s operations.”

Later on, in the same Report, we have a more or less definite statement respecting affiliated clubs.

“The general subject of the relation of affiliated clubs to the Union has been under frequent and serious discussion at meetings of the Council. . . . They (the Council) are strongly of opinion that much more may be done by local district Unions for the welfare of clubs in their districts than can possibly be accomplished by the parent Society (the Club and Institute Union), which has to maintain relations, involving more

or less expense, with clubs all over the kingdom. With a view to leaving the club free to give contributions from their too often slender resources to the proposed District Unions, the Council have resolved to abolish *the affiliation fee of 5s. a year*, retaining only a registration fee of 2s. 6d., to be paid when a club first comes into the Union."

We do not know what percentage of clubs, "established or first made known to the Council," had meantime been paying their affiliation fee of 5s. a year.

There is, however, a useful piece of information given us in this report respecting self-supporting clubs. Forty-six may be described as either entirely self-supporting or almost so. But we are again left in the dark as to whether these are among the clubs that have paid up their 5s. fee of affiliation.

This year the Council hit upon a useful and very necessary method of acquiring information respecting club life.

Forms were issued "requesting information on various points connected with the condition and working of clubs and institutes." Ninety-four "returns were obtained, a number far below that hoped for, and the same difficulty has existed more or less till quite recently. But here again we cannot tell to what clubs such forms were issued, or how great a percentage of those sending in returns were affiliated clubs.

The fifth Annual Report tells us of the formation of 38 new clubs, but the effect is somewhat neutralised when we find that 34 are defunct. This year 69 are known as almost self-supporting, but the old difficulty is experienced in the matter of securing returns.

The sixth Annual Report (1867-68) tells us of the resignation of the post of secretary by Mr Solly. For the first five years the work of the Union may be summed up as being mainly propagandist, and to this sphere of labour the late secretary was eminently suited.

It will be convenient here to append a short table showing the development of the movement from the years 1868-1882, in so far as it is illustrated by the number of clubs found existing from reference to the annual reports of this period.

The information derived from the reports after the year 1867 approaches nearer to accuracy in this matter, although the constant difficulty of obtaining returns renders our information on this head more or less incomplete.

Year.	Total No. of Clubs known to the Union.*	No. affiliated to the Union.	No. of affiliated Clubs in London.
1868	312	72	...
1869	355	128	...
1870	404	196?†	...
1871	440	230	...
1872	507	245	...
1873	535	245?	...
1874	579	257	...
1875	644	312	75
1876	682	382	68
1877	805?	435	96
1878	829	450	...
1879	...	483	92
1880	932	520	...
1881	...	...	...
1882	839	...	88

This table gives us a skeleton of the numerical development of the movement until 1882, and the years prior to 1868 have been dealt with through the earlier reports.

* Many of these Clubs, though not affiliated to the Union, and claiming no direct connection therewith, owed their origin to the same impulse and were in most cases formed under its advice and direction.

† Sixty-eight fresh clubs were affiliated this year, and this number added on to the 128 existing the year before gives us 196. This, however, is assuming that none had collapsed meanwhile, which is improbable.

To draw the reader's attention to each annual report in turn would be wearisome and little instructive ; we will therefore select certain epochs during the first twenty years, and trace the progress of the movement by special reference to the fifteenth and twentieth Annual Reports, which will bring us down to the year 1882.

This period of twenty years supplies us with a convenient line of division in tracing the growth of this movement, owing principally to the fact that shortly afterwards important changes were introduced into the management and constitution of the Union, giving it, so to speak, its modern form. And these changes require special and individual attention.

We will begin, then, with a statement of the condition of the Club and Institute Union gathered from the tenth Annual Report for the year 1871-72.

We learn that the total number of clubs known to the Society were, at this date, 507. That of these 67 were either new clubs or brought to the knowledge of the Society for the first time. This increase was somewhat smaller than in the two preceding years. There were 245 clubs affiliated to the Union at the time when this Report was issued, 37 having been added during the preceding twelve months.

From the statistical returns obtained from 164 clubs the average number of members in each is about 150.

Then we may notice the following facts in regard to the 164 clubs which have sent in returns :—

With respect to economic provision, we find that in 19 there are one or more Provident Societies ; in 10 there are Penny Savings Banks ; in 5 there are Coal Clubs ; and in 3 there are Building Societies.

With reference to Educational Classes, we learn that in 11 clubs French is taught ; in 27, reading ; in 28, writing ; in 29, arithmetic ; in 10, drawing ; in 7, chemistry ; in 11, singing. That 319 lectures have been delivered during the year in these 154 clubs.

The following details are also supplied :—In 15 clubs beer and other alcoholic drinks were supplied to members ; 64 were maintained without subscriptions from outsiders ; 68 of the clubs were stated to have made progress during the year, whereas 20 had retrograded, and the rest were reported to have remained as they were.

It is worthy of notice that out of 164 clubs sending in returns, only 64 were known to be self-supporting—*i.e.* rather more than one-third.

We will now take a glance at the state of affairs five years later, and summarize the contents of the fifteenth Annual Report.

This year we gather that 194 clubs have made returns. The following comment is noticeable :—"Unfortunately but a small number of clubs respond to our appeal (*i.e.* send in returns), so that we can arrive only at an approximate knowledge of the facts. The metropolitan clubs are more especially backward in this respect."

Under the heading "Educational Work" we find that in 40 per cent. of the clubs which have sent in returns, there are classes—the total number of such classes being 147.

Of these, 70 were for elementary instruction ; 36 for instruction in science and art. The other subjects taught were elocution, french, shorthand, and singing.

Lectures were given in 25 per cent. Altogether there were 351 lectures delivered in the 194 clubs.

In 82 per cent. there were libraries ; and this estimate includes those clubs whose only stock of books consisted of those contained in the "Union" boxes.

In the 158 clubs which had a library there were 94,915 volumes—an average of 600 volumes.

Next we come to Provident Work, and find that in 27 clubs there were Provident Societies, including those established for supplying the members with houses, watches, boots, and clothing.

In 38 clubs there were Loan Societies, Penny Banks, Coal, Flour, and Tea Clubs.

Therefore in 23 per cent. there existed some organisation for Provident purposes.

Under the heading "Recreation," we see that in 66 per cent. there were musical and elocutionary entertainments. The number of such fixtures amounted to 788.

In 35 per cent. of these clubs beer is supplied. The following is an interesting extract:—"The Council requested that it might be stated in the returns what was the result of the sale of such refreshments. In nearly every case it is stated that the result was satisfactory, and generally 'most satisfactory.' In no case is there any indication of the contrary."

"How far are clubs self-supporting?" is the next heading, and we learn that 52 per cent. of the clubs which have made returns are wholly self-supporting.

As to the general condition of the clubs, it is stated that 41 per cent. have made progress during the year, that 20 per cent. have remained very much as they were; and that 15 per cent. have been faring badly, although the nature of their misfortunes is not hinted at.

It is instructive to notice that in 1871-72 alcoholic drinks were supplied in only 15 clubs out of 164 sending in returns. We also learn that rather more than one-third of that number are described as self-supporting. Now, five years later, in 1876-77, out of 194 clubs which have made returns, 35 per cent. supply beer to the members. But by now, rather more than half of these clubs are self-supporting, and there is little or no doubt that this increased financial independence was to some extent due to the increased sale of exciseable drinks. This matter raises the much vexed question as to the expediency and morality of permitting the sale of intoxicants in Workmen's Clubs, and the question will be fully dealt with on both heads later on. It is sufficient here to mention that the difficulty of conducting Workmen's Clubs on teetotal lines is very great, and especially so

when financial independence is aimed at. Such clubs are usually short-lived. This difficulty had to be faced by the Council of the Club and Institute Union, and their method of dealing with it will be dwelt upon hereafter.

Perhaps the most important thing to notice under the head of education is the statement respecting the libraries. An average of six hundred volumes a club is, considering the poverty of these institutions, surprisingly good.

The expression "Union Boxes" may require explanation. Many clubs when first started would be too poor to supply themselves with a library of their own. They could, however, if affiliated to the Union, procure a loan of a box full, or several boxes, full of books from the Club and Institute Union Library. This supplies us with one useful illustration of the way in which a club might directly profit by attaching itself to this organisation.

The twelfth Annual Report tells us that there are fifty thousand members in the clubs to which the Union now lends books.

We will now pass on to the twentieth Annual Report, and incorporate a passage which is useful, both as a retrospect and as a statement of the condition of things at this time.

SUMMARY OF WORK DONE BY THE SOCIETY.

(*i.e.* Club and Institute Union.)

"1. The Society during the twenty years of its existence has been (more or less) directly instrumental in founding upwards of one thousand clubs and institutes having about 100,000 members.

"2. The number of clubs affiliated to the Society is upwards of 500, having more than 75,000 members; and about thirty new clubs join the Society annually.

"3. More than 50 per cent. of the clubs are wholly self-supporting.

"4. The Union has, during the last ten years, lent to its affiliated clubs upwards of 50,000 volumes of carefully-selected literature.

"5. Members of the Council have, during the same period, attended public meetings in all parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of explaining the aim and work of such institutions, and of delivering free lectures.

"6. On an average, 3000 letters a year are received, and a large number of visitors come to the Society's office, from all parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of obtaining information and help.

"7. To encourage manly and healthy forms of recreation, the Society has for many years past given trophies and prizes for skill in chess, cricket, football, rowing, athletics and swimming; and more recently for choral singing.

"8. To encourage intellectual culture, the Society grants money prizes for the best essays on questions of practical interest to workmen, and for the best papers in examinations on special periods of history; also for ability in debating.

"9. At the commencement of each winter the services of men of high attainments are sought as honorary lecturers at the London clubs (about 90 in number); lists of the lecturers and subjects being printed and issued.

"10. By an arrangement with the proprietors of *House and Home*, a column of that periodical is reserved weekly for articles, announcements, and general information useful to the clubs. This affords the means of constant communication between them and the Union Council, by whom the matter contained in the column thus placed at their disposal is supplied.

"11. The Society affords information and advice as to various forms of provident and educational work which can be carried on at the several clubs and institutes.

"12. Representatives of the London clubs meet monthly at the Union Office for the purpose of exchanging views and suggestions with the Chairman of the Council; and nine club representatives are elected annually by the clubs as members of the Union Council."

"A large part of the operations being carried on by members of the Council, no Society is conducted more economically."

The allusion made above to the proprietors of *House and Home* recalls the fact that the Club and Institute Union had established its own journal in the year 1874, but that it had been suspended in the year 1878 through lack of means.

In so brief a sketch as this, it has been useful to employ the method of comparison, and to estimate growth by a definite statement of the condition of the Union at various epochs. We come now to a period in the history of the movement which demands special attention.

We alluded above to a change which took place in management and constitution which gave to the Union its modern form. This change, which really began in the year 1884, and was not completed until some years later, was, to put it shortly, the reorganisation of the Union on democratic lines.

CHAPTER III.

GROWTH UNDER DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT.

OUR object in this chapter will be to show how, by adopting a democratic system of management, the Club and Institute Union was able to rid itself of its two most menacing dangers. In the first place, its existence was constantly being threatened by the scarcity of funds ; and, secondly, its influence was so slight and uncertain, that it was impossible for the officers at head-quarters to obtain information respecting the bulk of clubs that claimed affiliation with the Union. In 1885, for instance, the year after the change, or partial change, was effected, not one-fifth of the affiliated clubs send in returns. But when we reach 1894 there is scarcely a metropolitan club that neglects to do so, whereas in former years these clubs were the most neglectful of all in complying with this regulation.

Let us deal with the matter of finance first.

From the year 1869 to 1886 the Club and Institute Union had been suffering from pecuniary embarrassments, although in 1884 the pressure is considerably relieved.

We will spare the reader the horrors of balance-sheets, and content ourselves with noting a few of the yearly deficits.

In 1869-70 there was a deficit of £127. The next year ends with a deficit of £120. The year 1873-74 closed with one of "upwards of £100," and in 1883 there is still a debt left of £80.

The following year, however (1884), things look better, and we note that there is a large increase in the amount

of funds derived from the clubs themselves, while subscriptions and donations from outside have not increased in anything like the same proportion.

In 1887-88 the financial position is reported as "sound."* In 1888-89 there is an excess of assets over liabilities of £287.

Now the interest attaching to these figures lies in the fact that it was in the year 1884 that the constitution of the Union was reorganised on a more representative basis.

The following statement, relative to the change then introduced, is taken from the Annual Report of the year 1884-85 :—

"It is from discussion and collective action that one whose daily occupations concentrate his interests in a small circle, learns to feel for and with his fellow-citizens, and becomes consciously a member of a great community ; but discussions fly over the heads of those who have no votes.' This sentence is the key to the change which was introduced into our constitution last year, and explains the principle which moved those who introduced it. Has the result proved its correctness ? Without doubt, the answer is that it has.

"The work achieved by the Union in past years could only have been done under its then constitution ; but the time came when it was evident that the work was being done on wrong principles, and this through the very success that had been reached. So long as the main object was to found and establish clubs, it was necessary that the impulse should come from outside ; but when the chief work of the Union came to be the uniting and

* In 1872-73 the Queen gave a donation of £50 to the Union funds, and the Duke of Bedford £100.

In 1874-75 Lord Rosebery gave £173 to cover the deficit of the former year.

In 1875-76 the Queen gave another donation, and the Duke of Bedford another £100.

controlling the large number of clubs now in federation, that this should be done from outside was clearly wrong ; it had in it some taint of patronage—that rock on which, with the best intentions, so many societies have been wrecked. That a Union which was doing all in its power to found its clubs on an independent and self-supporting basis should deny to those clubs an adequate share in the management of the greater Club, the Union, of which they formed a part, was an anomaly which could not last. The change was made, and the Union is now a thoroughly representative body. Nor must the character of that representation be forgotten, for in it lies one of the strongest points of this organisation. Being, as it is, a Union of those who believe in the value of Working Men's Clubs, it is primarily composed of working men, who feel the desirability of such institutions ; but there are many who, though not “working men” in the common acceptance of the term, yet feel equally strongly the advantage of such institutions. Both these, then, should be represented, as, under the present rules, we find they are—the clubs by their *fifty-six* elected representatives, the subscribers by their *twenty-four* elected representatives. So that the subscribers may feel that they, too, are members of a *Union*, and that they are working in the highest and best way in which work can be done—working *with* those they wish to help, not merely working *for* them.”

The appended table will show how the financial position of the Union was affected by the new constitution. The sums subscribed represent what was payed in from the clubs *only*, during each year.

Year . .	1881	1882	1883	1884*	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889
Sum subscribed	£201	£216	£241	£329	£459	£558	£682	£762	£877

* The year in which the constitution of the Union was changed.

From 1881-83 the increase in the amount of subscriptions from clubs themselves is only £40 for the three years. From 1884-89 there is an increase every year of, on an average, considerably over a hundred pounds.

The Council for the year 1885-86 was composed of eighty-one members. Of these fifty-eight were members of affiliated clubs, and appointed to seats on the Council in order to represent those clubs; the remaining twenty-three, however, were elected in virtue of no such connection. Originally, of course, the whole Council was composed of such people—good people who were promoters of a cause they believed to be a useful one; nor was it until the year 1871-72 that any idea at all of representative control was thought of. In that year five delegates elected by the affiliated clubs themselves were admitted to seats on the Council: in other words, two hundred and forty-five clubs supplied only *five* members to a Council of between forty and fifty persons, which existed for the sake of promoting the welfare of these clubs. By the year 1882 this number has increased to nine. Nothing very democratic so far! This state of things seems to have obtained until what we may call The Revolution of 1884-85.

In the year 1888-89 the democratic development was consummated. Mr J. J. Dent, who had been appointed Secretary in 1882, was an ardent Co-operator, and instrumental in maintaining connections between the Club Union and the Co-operative Union; and in this year, 1885-86, the Club Union became a Registered Co-operative Society and a member of the Co-operative Union. The twenty-seventh Annual Report tells us how, after twenty-six years' existence as a voluntary organisation, the Club and Institute Union has become a legally-constituted corporate body, having power to continue in its own name all the varied work which has hitherto been identified with it; to carry on largely increased trading operations, and to raise and lend capital to its

members and others with a security not before so easily obtainable. Its membership is now restricted to clubs and societies the management of which is of a representative character, and the membership of individuals has become a tradition of the past. To become a member of the Union a club or society must be a *shareholder* holding from one to four five-shilling transferable shares in proportion to the number of its own members, and must pay to the general funds an annual fee of from five shillings to one pound. The Union being registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1876, the liability of its shareholders is limited to the amount of the shares taken up, so that the risk of membership is in no way increased. In addition to the power of admitting to membership, the Union can affiliate to itself such societies as desire some of its privileges but are not able to become shareholders.

The change made in the constitution is an important one. The ownership and management of the Union is now entirely in the hands of the clubs which belong to it, and it rests entirely with them to show by their careful management of its business, their judicious extension of its usefulness, and a steady development of its financial strength, that they are alive to the responsibility undertaken by them, and equal to bearing it successfully.

In order to comply with the requirements of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act the rules had to be set forth that :—

“The object of the Union is to carry on trades of general advisers, publishers, stationers, and booksellers, general dealers, and manufacturers, both wholesale and retail, of any article which any general meeting from time to time directs or authorises.”

At first sight this seems to limit considerably the scope of the Union, but since the Act permits any use being made of the profits of the society which may be set forth

in the rules, the difficulty was overcome by the provision that the profits of the Union should be applied as follows :—

- “(a) In allotting to a Central Hall Fund, to be applied towards building, or purchasing, or hiring land and premises for the Union, an amount not less than the amount of subscriptions and donations received from persons other than members.
- “(b) In assisting in the establishment and maintenance of Clubs and Institutes or Associations where the members may meet for business, mental improvement, and recreation.
- “(c) In promoting mutual intercourse between members and others interested in improving the condition of the people of the United Kingdom.
- “(d) In promoting education by the establishment of Classes, Examinations, and Scholarships.
- “(e) In maintaining Circulating and Reference Libraries with the best works in all departments of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics, for the use of members.
- “(f) In promoting such social, provident, and recreative purposes as may from time to time be found desirable.
- “(g) In subscribing to the funds of the Co-operative Union.
- “(h) In developing the business of the Union.”

This portion of the Report concludes thus :—

“It will thus be seen that the work of the Union is in no sense limited, while the greater stability given to it by the legal protection afforded by registration is secured. In order to qualify as shareholders those clubs which belonged to the Union previous to its registration, the required number of fully-paid shares have been allotted to them out of the balance of profit carried forward from last year.”

It will be useful here to append a table showing the financial progress of the Union from the years 1883 to 1893. The table is taken from the current Annual Report. The Annual Report of the year 1891-92 states that although "the number of clubs admitted to the Union during the year has not been so large as in some recent years, and the number removed from the list has been somewhat greater than usual, still it is a fact that the position of the Union is one of greater financial strength than in any previous year."

Two items in the following table placed under "Receipts" may require a little explanation—the terms "Associate Cards" and "Monthly Pass Cards." When one joins an affiliated club, one obtains the right of entry into other clubs so affiliated and so associated, by the purchase of a card called "Associate Card." Most affiliated clubs in London are in this way associated to the Union as well; some few, however, that do not encourage visitors from other affiliated clubs, are content with the privilege of affiliation alone. This "Associate Card" costs sixpence, and the sixpences so secured are the property of the Union, and not of the individual club. "Monthly Pass Cards" are issued to all members on payment of their monthly fee (of sixpence or sometimes more) to the club to which they belong. This "Pass Card" costs a half-penny, and this half-penny, again, is the property of the Union and not of the individual club.

If one wishes to enter another club so affiliated and associated, one should be armed with the "Associate Card," and with the "Monthly Pass Card," to show that one is actually a financial member of the Union for that month.

TABLE SHOWING THE PROGRESS OF THE UNION.

	No. of Clubs.	RECEIPTS.						Total of Central Hall Fund.	Total of Share and Loan Capital	Value of Land and Buildings.	Other Investments.	Excess of Assets over Liabilities.
		Annual and Ampla- tion Fees.	Associate Cards.	Monthly Pass Cards.	Subscrip- tions and Donations.	Cash for Goods Sold.	Cash for Journal.					
Year ending—		*£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
March 1883 .	No record.	55	57	132	332	9	...	55	...	...	...	680
" 1884 .	"	58	126	146	388	11	61	...	...	...	...	42
" 1885 .	"	58	171	230	279	24	155	...	...	...	...	69
" 1886 .	"	60	222	277	232	111	202	...	...	...	...	83
" 1887 .	"	77	250	356	215	226	a42	...	...	...	...	258
" 1888 .	"	57	280	426	185	298	a163	d207	...	...	208	c363
" 1889† .	"	78	341	458	204	326	289	392	...	...	...	...†
July 1st 1889												
(3 months) .												
Year ending—												
June 1890 .	328	9	127	137	27	71	97	420	e178	...	473	287
" 1891 .	384	96	547	577	135	366	551	f880	193	...	967	308
" 1892 .	422	113	537	651	132	479	542	1047	217	...	1402	665
" 1893 .	410	144	505	664	172	575	621	1251	6894	7984	683	937
" 1893 .	421	140	476	706	175	495	543	1425	16322	17635	684	1273

* In all cases the nearest complete £ is given.

† Union registered this year.

‡ Not balanced in March.

§ This amount was a deficit.

a During part of these years the *Journal* was under private management.

c The stock of saleable goods was first taken as an asset this year

d Subscriptions and donations are now credited to this fund. They were previously taken as profit, and used for the general work of the Union.

e £174 of this was allotted out of the balance of assets over liabilities previous year.

f £300 was transferred from General Fund to Central Hall Fund.

Now in 1883 we find there is a deficit of £80.

In 1884, when the reform in the organisation of the Union took place, there is a balance of £42; and in 1893 there is the large balance of £1273. It is, further, interesting to notice how the growing financial prosperity of the Union has been consistent with the falling off in the amounts of subscriptions and donations from outside. In 1883 the total amount of money realised by the Union was £640; of this amount £332, or rather more than half, was composed of subscriptions and donations from outside; and there was a deficit at the end of the year of £80.

Contrast with this the state of affairs in 1893; and in making this comparison let us remember that in its early days the Union was practically "run" by outside support. The fourth Annual Report (1865-66), for instance, tells us that of all the Clubs in the Union (and there must have been upwards of 200 of them, and possibly many more) only 46 are self-supporting, or "almost self-supporting." In 1866-67, sixty-nine are known as "almost self-supporting." Now, in 1893, the net income of the Union amounts to £1468. For how much of this are subscriptions and donations from outside responsible? A humble £175! and there is an excess of assets over liabilities of £1273. Nor has 1894 a less satisfactory record. Not only are the Clubs belonging to the Union self-supporting, but they supply the bulk of the income which is used by the central authorities for the general purposes of the Union. So much, then, for the results of democratic methods in the sphere of finance.

It will be a relief to turn from the question of finance to other points of interest; and we will revert once more to the year 1884-85, the year which may be regarded as the dividing line in the history of the Club and Institute Union. The Annual Report for that year contains an interesting set of club statistics, and affords a good basis of comparison whereby we may judge of progress or retrogression from various aspects.

What follows is from p. 17 of the twenty-third Annual Report :—

“We have endeavoured to obtain statistics as to the clubs, and for that purpose sent out to every club we knew a form to be filled up and returned: of these, unfortunately, only 119 have been returned to us, from which we have drawn up the following table :—

17,864. Total number of Members.

104 Clubs are affiliated to the Union.

53 are Registered under the Friendly Societies Act.

7 are incorporated under a trust-deed.

45 have 79 provident societies connected with them.

83 have libraries, with 66,768 volumes.

68 have lectures.

20 have educational classes.

78 supply excisable articles.

41 do not.

68 recognise the Union Associate Card—*i.e.* admit as visitors members of other clubs producing the card.”

The twenty-ninth Annual Report for the year 1890-91 supplies us with a table of statistics affording us useful points of comparison with 1884-85.

The following is the record on p. 63 of the twenty-ninth Annual Report :—

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS.

These summaries are imperfect, even for the 197 clubs from which returns have been received since many of them have not replied to all the questions. The number of clubs replying (which should be 197) is shown after brackets in the last column.

	CLUBS.		Totals.
	Metro- politan District.	Provin- cial.	
Total Number of Clubs making returns, ...	82	115	197
Having <i>political</i> objects, ...	47	17	64
Having <i>social</i> objects only, ...	35	98	133
Registered under Friendly Societies Act, ...	70	67	137
Unregistered, ...	12	42	54
Total number of members, ...	22,315	25,789	48,108
Average number of members, ...	279	224	251½
Supply excisable drink, ...	73	87	160
Do not supply excisable drink, ...	6	21	27
Open on Sundays, ...	68	69	137
Closed on Sundays, ...	10	38	48
Have lectures on Sundays, ...	48	21	69
No lectures on Sundays, ...	31	91	122
Have lectures on week-days, ...	57	57	114
No lectures on week-days, ...	19	52	71
Have concerts on Sundays, ...	41	16	57
No concerts on Sundays, ...	40	96	136
Have games on Sundays, ...	18	1	19
No games on Sundays, ...	63	112	175
Have special reading-room, ...	63	96	159
Have libraries, ...	67	79	146
Total number of vols. in libraries, ...	31,532	33,824	65,356
Freehold premises, ...	12	21	33
Leasehold premises, ...	70	94	164

We learn from the same report that 422 clubs are affiliated to the Union at this time. Now, in 1885, out of the 119 sending in reports, 104 are reported as being affiliated to the Union, yet an earlier passage in the same report tells us that the total number of affiliated clubs is 543. Therefore in 1891 a better average of returns is sent in than in 1885. In 1885 not one-fifth of

affiliated clubs take the trouble to send in returns, whereas in 1891 almost half have done so.

Then, again, the statistics produced for the year 1891 are more elaborate and workmanlike than those for 1885. A distinction is drawn between the metropolitan and provincial clubs, and both are dealt with separately. Many more points are adverted to, and a more complete knowledge is displayed. In 1885 the doings and fortunes of not one-fifth of the whole institution are known to the governing body. In 1891 the doings and fortunes of almost half of the whole are known at head-quarters and to the club-public. Let us draw attention to one instructive item. We find in 1885 that the total number of members known to the authorities is 17,864; it is to these people that the given items of information refer—they are, as it were, under the eye of this organisation; their method of employing their leisure, is, to a certain extent, and, by their own wish, subjected to an organised control.

In 1891 that population has increased to 48,108. In other words, although the branches of this institution have become somewhat less extensive, yet its capacity as an effective and controlling force has been more than doubled.

We have shown how, during the same period, the management of the Union itself had been steadily improving, how it had been rescued from a condition of dependence and insolvency to one of freedom and financial prosperity; and it has been pointed out that these changes for the better have been contemporaneous with the reconstitution of the Union on an independent and representative basis.

We will now proceed from the past to the present. A like summary of statistics has been placed at our disposal through the courtesy of the present Secretary of the Union, Mr B. T. Hall, and of the late Secretary, Mr J. J. Dent.

SUMMARY OF PARTICULARS RELATING TO 366 WORKMEN'S CLUBS WHICH HAVE MADE
RETURNS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DEC. 31, 1893, TO THE WORKING MEN'S
CLUB AND INSTITUTE UNION.

	No. of Clubs.		No. of Members at end of 1893.	No. which are Registered.	Do Clubs supply Excessibles?		Clubs Open on Sunday.	No. of Clubs which, on Sundays, have			Libraries.		
	Affiliated.	Making Returns.			No. which do.	Amount of Bar Receipts.		Lectures.	Concerts.	Games.	No. of Clubs.	No. of Volumes.	Average Volumes per Club.
Metropolitan :—													
Political	88	82	21,442	74	(a) 82	£73,308	77	62	51	28	67	28,292	422
Social	67	62	13,514	50	50	37,036	43	19	30	20	42	36,124	860
Provincial :—													
Political	57	52	11,230	27	(b) 51	18,390	34	15	7	1	34	9,028	265½
Social	183	170	34,411	105	(c) 131	71,087	124	80	32	3	110	41,071	373
Totals	395	366	80,597	256	314	£199,821	278	126	120	52	253	114,515	453
Percentage of clubs making returns .. }	...	...	...	70·0	85·8	...	76·0	34·4	33·0	14·2	69·1	...	...

(a) 80 clubs only returned the amount of receipts.

(b) 50 clubs only returned the amount of receipts.

(c) 126 clubs only returned the amount of receipts.

From the above table we learn that out of the 150 metropolitan clubs affiliated to the Union, no less than 144 have sent in returns.

The population embraced by these institutions alone is 34,956. There are 240 provincial clubs affiliated to the Union : of these 222 have sent in returns.

If to the population of the metropolitan clubs we add that of the provincial clubs, we have a total of 80,597 ; and over this great community the Club and Institute Union exercises not a vague and shadowy, but a real and more or less effective control.

CHAPTER IV.

DRINK IN WORKMEN'S CLUBS.

THE sale of intoxicating drinks in workmen's clubs has given rise to much discussion and adverse criticism. At the outset it is necessary to admit that the founders of the Club and Institute Union were opposed to the sale of such articles in the clubs connected with the institution.

The primary idea of the founders was to strike a blow against the intemperance so prevalent among the industrial and labouring classes. Some years before the idea of the Club and Institute Union took shape, this abuse, which so often made the workman's leisure a curse to him instead of a blessing, had been troubling the minds of humanitarians, and their cogitations had worked out to something like the following result. Workmen, in their leisure hours, require social intercourse; but they have few places where they may meet for such a purpose, outside the public-house. When in the public-house, the temptation to drink too much is frequently beyond their powers of resistance. The conclusion they arrived at being that it is imperatively necessary to provide opportunities for such social intercourse in safe places, and under conditions offering no temptations. Clubs and institutes should be formed, where men could meet together and talk or amuse themselves in various ways, but where no stimulants should be provided.

Such an institution, if in the country, would commonly be under the direct supervision and patronage of the

clergyman or squire of the district; if in a town, they would usually owe their existence and prosperity to some rich or influential citizen. As a rule, they would not be self-managed and self-supporting.

Now the Club and Institute Union, although it was one of the results of this impulse, was the essence of a movement which implied a far larger scope and sphere of action. It is alluded to by its promoters as a national movement, and one of the first requisites of a national movement is that it should be capable of standing on its own legs. It cannot owe its existence to outside support. It must stand or fall on its own merits. Then came the plain, blunt question which had to be answered from the teaching of experience, Can a workmen's club exist as a self-managed and self-supporting institution without the sale of stimulants? Experience seems to teach us that, as a rule, it cannot.

For several years the Club and Institute Union made a bold stand, and the same experience was repeated year after year. Workmen did not care to join temperance clubs, or, if they joined them, withdrew their membership when the novelty of the thing had worn off. Thus, monthly payments could not be relied upon, and the club either collapsed or else owed its existence to outside support.

The late Lord Lyttleton, who became president of the Union in 1871, was one of the first to recognise the necessity of making some change if the Club and Institute Union was ever to develop in a manner worthy of the labour and thought spent upon it.

Restrictions against the sale of stimulants were therefore removed, and the club movement assumed a solidarity and vitality of its own.

Precautions, however, against the abuse of this new privilege, were not omitted.

The ninth Annual Report for the year 1870-71 has the

following interesting passage referring to this matter under the heading "Public-House Clubs" :—

"Circumstances have recently occurred, in connection with this movement, which have attracted considerable attention and discussion. There appears to be a desire, on the part of persons who have lost, or who have been unable to obtain, public-house licences, to open premises under the designation of "Workmen's Clubs," where, with more or less of the usual club arrangements and restrictions, the sale of refreshments may be carried on for the benefit of the proprietor. In one such case the club was affiliated to this society, but the Council, on finding that the management was very unsatisfactory, and such as to bring the Club Movement into disrepute, passed a resolution to the effect that the name of the club should be removed from their list of institutions, and the fact was communicated to the newspapers. The Council have been assured by the Revenue authorities that there is no desire on their part to interfere with the sale of exciseable articles in *bona-fide* clubs where those refreshments are sold for the benefit of members only, and under such regulations as shall prevent the abuse of that privilege, or the creation of a fictitious membership."

The tenth Annual Report contains the following explicit statement in connection with the matter :—

"Several circumstances having occurred last year which rendered it doubtful whether clubs supplying exciseable liquors to the members might not thereby render themselves liable to prosecution for the infringement of the Excise Laws, the subject was discussed at the Annual Conference of Delegates from Workmen's Clubs {on the 20th July 1892. This resulted in the adoption of a resolution, and effect was given to the recommendation therein contained by a letter received shortly afterwards from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which it was stated that clubs can avoid liability by adopting such rules as the Board of Inland Revenue might consider necessary,

and by forwarding a copy of the same to the Board for their information. This suggestion has accordingly been followed by clubs which it affects, and much uncertainty and difficulty thereby avoided."

These extracts bring out two important points. Firstly, that the Club and Institute Union itself exercises a careful supervision over the clubs connected with it; secondly, that no club affiliated to the Union is permitted to sell intoxicants unless subject to the conditions of the Board of Inland Revenue.

The following extract from the fourteenth Annual Report (1875-76) brings both points into prominence:—

"We are aware that similar places (*i.e.* sham clubs) are in existence in several towns, and we may specially mention Nottingham, where one of these sham institutions sought affiliation with our Society, and another actually obtained admission into union, before we had discovered its true character. In both cases there was reason to apprehend prosecution, and the 'managers' therefore sought, no doubt, to connect themselves with our Society as a sort of guarantee of respectability. In the one case we at once discovered the facts (a member of our Council having visited Nottingham expressly for that purpose), and the application was refused.

"In the other the previous order of affiliation was rescinded as soon as the real state of the case became known to us.

"No club supplying exciseable liquors to its members is admitted by our Society into union unless it adopts the regulation relating to the sale of those articles which was drawn up by the Council and approved by the Board of Inland Revenue; and every such club obtains from the latter formal sanction to the sale of these refreshments, under the conditions stated in the rule just referred to."

The seventeenth Annual Report for the year 1878-79 contains a reprint of a long article in the *Standard* which

appeared, we presume, about June 1878. There had been some further discussion between the Board of Inland Revenue and the Union Council, and the results of their deliberations bring out another point in connection with the precautions taken against abuses in the matter of drink. So far the Council had adopted a sensible and firm policy in the matter. They exercise the power of refusing or rescinding affiliation; they keep an eye upon the management and conduct of affiliated clubs, and step in authoritatively when abuses come under their notice. Also they compel all clubs in union to submit to the conditions of the Board of Inland Revenue if they wish to sell exciseable articles to their members, and no proprietary club is allotted the privilege of affiliation.

It was, however, necessary that the attitude of the Club and Institute Union in this matter should be the attitude assumed by the clubs affiliated to the Union.

The matter at issue between the Board of Inland Revenue and the Council throws light upon this last point—the attitude assumed by the clubs themselves in this important question.

We quote the following passage from the article in the *Standard* alluded to above:—

“The Board of Inland Revenue drew attention to the fact that in applications for permission to sell exciseable liquors in working men’s clubs without licence, the right of members to introduce non-members was almost always included. It was suggested that this privilege might be so applied as to enable large sections of working men to evade the existing restrictions upon the liquor traffic, and to obtain liquor during the hours when the public-houses are closed, without the guarantee for orderliness implied in the fact of membership. It was pointed out that working men members might be somewhat lax about introducing strangers of unknown antecedents—a danger against which there is practically no need to guard in the clubs frequented by the upper

classes. The opinion of the Council of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union was therefore solicited by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue as to the possibility and expediency of insisting upon some 'restrictive regulations.' The Council at once replied that the importance of enforcing some such regulations was recognised, and a careful inquiry would be instituted."

So much, then, for the point at issue. The Commissioners were acting perfectly legitimately in drawing attention to the matter; and it remains to be seen in what spirit they were met by the Council; and lastly, to how great an extent the Council was capable of influencing the clubs.

The article proceeds:—

"The Union, therefore, proposed to enforce new conditions of affiliation, which the Board of Inland Revenue have pronounced satisfactory. In return, it was asked and conceded, that the affiliation should be accepted as a *prima facie* guarantee for the genuineness of a particular club, and that the permission demanded for the consumption of exciseable articles by non-members on the occasion of debates, concerts, and lectures should not be refused. The final answer of the Board of Inland Revenue was, that 'until the operation of the new rules be shown to be insufficient for the safety of the Revenue' the Board will not press for any further restrictions. The working of this reasonable compromise now depends, in the first place, on the extent to which the Working Men's Clubs in general adopt the terms of affiliation proposed by the Council; and, in the next place, upon the good faith with which the affiliated institutions give effect to an honourable understanding." In a circular address to the clubs the Council of the Union say: "In order to secure this immunity from interference, the Council have pledged themselves to urge upon the clubs the adoption of certain rules, which are as follows: 'Should any visitor to this club, not being a member

of the same, pay for refreshments served to him, the member introducing such visitor shall be expelled from membership on the fact being duly proved, and it shall be the duty of any officer or member of the club becoming aware of such breach of the rules to report it at once to the President, Secretary, or Committee. The above rule shall be permanently exhibited in as prominent a manner as possible at the entrance of the club-house, and in any room where refreshments are served.'"

All clubs affiliated to the Union adopt the rule that no visitor—that is, one who is not an affiliated member of the Club and Institute Union—may pay for refreshments ; if he is introduced into the club by a friend, any refreshment he may require must be paid for by his friend, and infringement of this rule renders the member liable to expulsion.

But in addition to these regulations for protecting the Revenue, most clubs have bye-laws of their own. Most, for instance, will not allow a visitor inside the bar at all, and even a member from an affiliated club will be compelled to show his book, containing his Associate Card and Monthly Pass Card, before he is admitted to the bar, though this last precaution may be omitted if the person in question happens to be a well-known member of the Club and Institute Union. In any case, however, he may be called upon by any member to produce his book and show his Monthly Pass Card.

But to all this it may be objected that, so far, no guarantee is offered against members of a club abusing their privileges by drinking too much themselves ; that measures which protect the Revenue do not in any degree prevent drunkenness in a club on the part of its own members. This, of course, is perfectly true, but here again precautions are not wanting. The clubs themselves have bye-laws affecting the matter, and a member who becomes intoxicated, or in any way disgraces himself in the club, at once renders himself liable to suspension or

expulsion. Again, if an individual club is lax in this respect, and permits drunkenness and misconduct within its walls, their evil report will, sooner or later, reach the ears of the authorities at the Club and Institute Union, and the club in question will be rendered liable to expulsion from the Union. There is no club in the Union that is not keenly alive to this, and the result is that the attitude of the clubs as a whole is one that backs the efforts of the Council in their attempt to put down abuses of this nature.

Yet one hears many complaints. Not an uncommon one is based upon the fact that certain clubs affiliated to the Union are "tied to brewers." That is to say, certain clubs are, in the first instance, started by the help of loans borrowed from brewers, and borrowed on the condition that the club in question purchases its liquors from the company that has supplied the loan. The main evils resulting from such an arrangement are, that the club may be compelled to pay a high rate of interest, and has little means of protection in case of being supplied with liquors of an inferior quality. Nevertheless, the phrase, "tied to the brewers," seems to be an evil-sounding one, and much capital may be made out of it by opponents who wish to damage the movement in the eyes of an uninitiated public. The system, however, is an unsatisfactory one, and has been recognised as such by the Council of the Union; nor will the position of our critics be strengthened, when we inform them that a regulation is now in force that no club so "tied to a brewer" will be admitted as a member of the Union. It remains for them to make the most of the fact that the rule has no retrospective force.

But the question still remains, To how great an extent is excessive drinking prevalent? This, of course, is a very difficult question to answer. There are, however, means at our disposal which may help us to a solution.

It would, of course, be folly to assert that drunkenness is unknown in these institutions. Occasionally instances of intemperance do occur, and such cases are usually dealt with by the committee of the club, and the offender punished, either by suspension or expulsion. Such cases are, however, rare, and the real danger does not lie in the fact of an occasional lapse of this sort so much as in the facilities for constant "soaking" which club-life seems to offer. A man, for instance, may sit at the bar for a couple of hours, and drink a great deal more than he ought, without positively becoming drunk, or behaving in an unseemly manner, or creating a disturbance. In this case the authorities in the club can take no official cognisance of his proceedings; his behaviour may be, all the while, decorous even to austerity, but at the same time he is injuring his health, and impoverishing his wife and children.

That this is an evil which actually exists, we are the last to deny, at the same time we affirm that it is an evil which is greatly exaggerated: there are many clubs in the Union where it is practically non-existent, and in this matter it is interesting to notice that the people who know least about these clubs are the people who have the blackest and most definite charges to bring against them.

An enterprising and thoroughly well-meaning person has perhaps heard about the Club Movement, and wishes to see one of these clubs. He prevails upon a friend who is a member of one of them, to take him round.

He is shown over the premises, and what does he see?

Workmen everywhere—unshaven workmen, workmen with the marks of their toil yet upon them, workmen with mugs of beer at their elbows, workmen playing billiards, workmen playing cards (not for money, as that is against rules), workmen reading newspapers or chatting at the bar, workmen drinking at the bar. Also his nose is assailed with the odour of strong tobacco

which is being burnt in the bowls of fifty or a hundred short clay pipes.

The premises, too, are large, somewhat dusty, and not very luxuriously furnished ; not squalid exactly, but to say the least, homely. He has not, however, discovered that the rent of the premises is probably £90 per annum, possibly even £150, which may, perhaps, account for a good deal.

He goes home with a jumbled impression left upon his brain of beer jugs, billiard balls, clay pipes, unshaven chins, and general cheerfulness. Moreover, he is quite positive that he heard a word beginning with a D.

The next morning he is questioned about his great adventure. "Were there many rows?" Well, no,—he cannot remember any rows. "Many people drunk?" Can't say ; he did not come across any one drunk, but a good many seemed to be drinking. Yet a week afterwards, should the subject of Workmen's Clubs turn up in conversation, his ideas will have become the more decided as they are divorced from the truth. "Oh, Workmen's Clubs, I know all about them ; I was in one last week. Mere drinking dens, I assure you !" And the subject is dismissed.

Through such channels does information too frequently run. In such a discussion as this, one piece of solid information carries much weight, and such a piece of information we are fortunately able to lay before our readers. The following figures have been obtained by enquiries which have been prosecuted through all the metropolitan clubs belonging to the Union during the year 1894.

The average expenditure per year per member of political clubs which supply exciseable articles, is sixty-nine shillings and twopence with a fraction over, giving us an average per week of one shilling and fourpence farthing, or rather more than twopence per member per night. The average of social clubs is somewhat less, and

works out to one shilling and threepence halfpenny per member per week.

It is, of course, easy to criticise these figures by calling attention to the fact that all the members of a club do not attend on a given night.* The effect of this criticism is, however, considerably neutralized by two things: firstly, that the average of twopence per member per night includes everything supplied by members to visitors who are not affiliated members of the Union; and, secondly, that in this same twopence is included the purchase of mineral waters, tobacco, and in many cases food, which is a very considerable proportion of the whole expenditure.

Provincial clubs supply us with even a better record, for in their case the average works out to tenpence halfpenny per member per week for social clubs, and eightpence per member per week for political clubs.

A somewhat modest expenditure, this, for drinking dens!

These figures supply us with a far more rational basis of criticism than the occasional flying visits of enterprising and thoroughly well-meaning persons. The matter, as we know, is a difficult one to investigate, but the most rational way of setting to work is to start with a cool and unbiassed mind and attach their proper value to facts which have a significance that it is impossible for a fair-minded person to ignore.

The appended table, taken from the current Annual Report (1894), will be a useful supplement in this context.

It should be noticed that the table refers to *Bar Receipts*, and not to the sums taken for the sale of intoxicants only.

* The great bulk of members attend on Saturdays and Sundays, often with their wives and friends. This amounts to almost the same as the steady attendance of each member.

TABLE SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF BAR RECEIPTS OVER THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE 306 CLUBS WHICH SUPPLY EXCISABLE ARTICLES, AND HAVE MADE RETURNS OF THE AMOUNT THEREOF.

		Number of		Total Bar Receipts.	
		Clubs.	Members.	Amount.	Average per Member per week.
Metropolitan...	Political...	80	20,676	£73,308	1s. 4½d.
	Social	50	11,102	37,036	1s. 3½d.
Provincial	Political...	50	10,646	18,390	8d.
	Social	126	30,550	71,087	10¾d.
Totals.....		306	72,974	£199,821	Aver. 1s. 0¾d.
Percentage of total Clubs making returns		83·6	90·5	...	...

We claim, then, that the charges brought against workmen's clubs are grossly exaggerated, although, at the same time, we would be the last to say that they are absolutely groundless. Indeed, we have never heard of anyone so foolish as to imagine that workmen's clubs claim, in this respect, to stand on a higher moral platform than other clubs.

To hope for perfection in such institutions as these is manifestly absurd, but, at the same time, a serious question is suggested. We have every right to know whether all that might be done by so vast and powerful an organisation as this is actually done to prevent abuses of this nature.

We have seen that the Council of the Club and Institute Union is possessed of great powers. It can refuse affiliation to an ill-managed or, in any way, unsatisfactory club. It can expel for mismanagement any club already affiliated to the Union. It has the power of selection in the first instance, and any mistakes in selection may afterwards be rectified by expulsion. Where, then, is there room for serious abuse to creep

in? Theoretically there is no room. But in this case, unfortunately, as in so many other cases, theory and practice tell different tales. It would be an act of unkindness to the Club and Institute Union itself to attempt to conceal what, in the interests of all, should be known. Although, as we have stated, the clubs belonging to this Institution are, for the most part, free from grave abuse, yet it cannot be denied that there are a few clubs which merit condemnation. That such clubs as these, as a rule, have short careers, and collapse through their own mismanagement and nothing else, is a fortunate circumstance, but one that reflects no particular credit upon anybody. But it is an abuse that they should for any considerable time escape the vigilance of the Council, and continue as members of an institution which they are disgracing.

Most workmen's organisations are characterised by a spirit of extreme leniency. Workmen, at anyrate in London, and more especially East London, look upon each other's shortcomings with a charity that only just misses becoming levity. This, of course, is the manifestation of an impulse primarily good in itself, but which admits of many abuses. Their impulse is always to give everybody and everything "another chance," and when this spirit, admirable as it is in many ways, more or less controls their organisations, the result, too frequently, is laxity in administration, and loose government generally. Thus it follows that clubs which should not belong to the Union are not always expelled, but sometimes allowed to run their own course in the hope that they will sooner or later die of their own accord. That such clubs generally do become extinct before long offers no justification for the laxity of the controlling body. This spirit, however, is more manifest in the clubs themselves. Members are not expelled sufficiently often. The Committee stays its hand too long. A slight punishment may lead to reform; to be expelled from the club is a

serious thing ; the man loses his position in his own society, and it will be difficult for him, if not impossible, to join an affiliated club again. He may lose hope and go to the bad ; therefore he is "given another chance," perhaps only censured, or suspended for a short time.

But, what is perhaps more injurious than anything, this ill-timed leniency renders it difficult for the authorities at head-quarters to collect evidence respecting such clubs. Their hands are tied and their proceedings paralysed.

A visitor from the Union experiences great difficulty in getting at the facts, and in acquiring enough evidence to justify action. This difficulty alone is usually enough to account for the fact that they are slow to take action, but at the same time it is only just to mention that it is an ever-decreasing difficulty. In this matter, as in so many others, things are improving. Clubs are more ready to fill up and send in their returns, and these returns contain every scrap of information that is, or may be, of use in estimating the condition of particular clubs and of the movement in general. Such information is largely the subject-matter of every Annual Report. During the present year the clubs neglecting to fill in the returns are the rare exceptions, whereas in former years it was difficult to persuade even a decent proportion of clubs to take the trouble to comply with this very just and reasonable demand.

The danger, therefore, of any club escaping the scrutiny of the authorities is daily decreasing, for the refusal to fill up the return may justly constitute an *a priori* ground of suspicion.

We may notice, again, an increasing amount of caution exercised by the Union in the matter of admitting clubs to the privilege of affiliation. No metropolitan club, the members of which pay a subscription of less than sixpence a month is admitted into Union. This is a rough and ready test to start with, but at the same

time it is one which has a significance of its own. Sixpence a month is truly a small sum to pay for the benefits and advantages of club life, and those who grudge even that amount are naturally regarded as unwilling to make any sacrifice in order to promote a corporate concern. Then again, the smaller the subscription, the more has the club to rely for its existence upon the bar-takings, and is therefore less likely to be an ornament to the Union. But this test, since it is a rough and ready one, is, of course insufficient, and is supplemented by very close and careful enquiries. When any club makes application for affiliation, a visitor is sent from the Union to make special personal enquiries upon various important matters, and in order that no doubt may be entertained as to the thoroughness of this investigation, we append the set of questions which are given to the visitor on a printed form, and which are to be filled in on the spot and finally submitted to the inspection of the authorities at the Union :—

REPORT of visit to the
situate
on

Club and Institute,

189 by Mr.

INSTRUCTION TO VISITOR.

Please obtain and fill in as much information as possible upon the following points.

I. Names of (a) President, (b) Secretary,
(c) Treasurer, (d) Steward,
(e) Trustees,

II. How often does Committee meet?
What evenings and hour?

III. Is a proper record of Committee Meetings kept in a Minute Book?

IV. What Account Books are used?

V. How often is (a) Cash Book balanced?
(b) Stock taken? (c) Accounts audited and
balance sheet made out? Has the Club a
banking A/c?

VI. Are the accounts kept upon system recommended by the Union? If not, is the Secretary willing to adopt it if someone is sent by the Union to instruct him?

VII. Who orders goods, &c., on behalf of the Club?

VIII. How is Steward paid, *i.e.* by salary or otherwise?

IX. Is any official or other person benefited directly or indirectly by an increase in the profits arising from the supplying of refreshments?

X. Are visitors permitted to purchase or pay for anything in the Club?

XI. Are the premises rented by the Club?

If so, at what rent?

Can the tenancy be ended?

Under what conditions

XII. Is the landlord in any way connected with the Club?

XIII. Are the premises *owned* by the Club?

If so, state how acquired, *i.e.* by gift or by purchase?

If purchased, how was capital raised?

XIV. Is there a mortgage on the property? If so, for what amount?

£ Is it a private ordinary mortgage, or is it held by a brewer or distiller?

If held by a brewer or distiller, is the Club free to purchase beer, spirits, etc., from whom it pleases, without in any way affecting the mortgage?

XV. Is the Club one which, in your opinion, is *bona fide*, and managed in a way creditable to those responsible for it, and do you recommend it for admission to the Union?

Make here any general remarks you may deem desirable, sign your name at the end, and return the form to the Secretary of the Union.

The bearing of questions IX. X. XIV. upon the subject of drink will be obvious to everybody.

In summarizing the matter we may safely say that there seems to be little danger of drink being a real stumbling-block in the way of the progress and prosperity of these institutions. We have seen that without the sale of exciseable articles an organisation of this sort would indubitably collapse, nor do we shrink from making this statement in spite of the fact of its suggesting the cheap witticism that it is an organisation kept afloat by beer. Such a remark is suggested, but not

justified. We have been at pains to explain the various precautions which are adopted against abuse. We have pointed out that, for the most part, they achieve their end. Where there is weakness, we have given it no quarter, but at the same time we have shown that where such weakness exists, its tendency is to decrease. Lastly, we would call attention to the fact that the machinery designed to prevent all such abuse exists, and has no need of being called into being. The administration is complete ; it remains for the administrators to render it in all cases effective. That they can, and will, do this we have justification for believing.

CHAPTER V.

EDUCATIONAL WORK OF CLUBS.

"ABOUT that lecture on Sunday week, Mr Smith, do you think people will like it?"

"Yes, sir. You see our chaps have had so many political lectures that they want a bit of a change."

"So you think 'British Seamen' will suit?"

"Yes, sir. And I will see that it is properly posted up in the club."

Sunday week has come, and my friend, who is to deliver the lecture, and I are on our way to a small club situated in one of the streets that lead into the Bethnal Green Road. The lecture is announced to begin at 11.30, but we know that, as a matter of fact, it will not start till twelve o'clock at the earliest. Therefore when we reach the club we have twenty minutes to spare, and are shown up into the committee room. There are several committee men chatting together, who, upon our entrance, offer us seats, and make a few polite inquiries as to the nature of the coming lecture. Some few are a trifle surprised at the title they have seen posted up downstairs, for lectures on current politics and current topics are more usual, and the notice has intimated that, this morning, events are to be touched upon which happened somewhere about the time of Queen Elizabeth. The novelty of the subject, however, seems to elicit an additional interest.

Twelve o'clock.

At five minutes past, the political secretary of the club enters and invites us downstairs. We enter the hall and

find rows of empty chairs, and wonder, at least my friend wonders, what is going to happen. Then a great bell is rung and about four people enter the room. Five minutes elapse, and even I begin to entertain slight qualms.

Then the Chairman enters, shakes hands with my friend, and the two mount the platform.

Two more minutes pass, and about twenty-five seats are occupied.

The bell rings again.

The Chairman introduces my friend to the audience in a short speech, and the lecture begins. The bold romantic deeds of men of old are being dealt upon, and the room begins to fill.

The men like the lecture, and private messages are sent round the club that there is something on worth hearing. By half-past twelve there are about a hundred workmen in the room, all listening in absolute silence and attention: this number goes on increasing till the end.

The lecturer has no rooted objection to the mugs which certain of his audience have brought in with them, and all goes smoothly.

The applause is appropriate and telling; points of special interest do not miss fire. An overbold though successful adventure, a proper scorn of great odds, a mighty utterance, or a chivalrous act of clemency, each elicits, in turn, its appreciative round of "Hear, hear."

The audience is realising its affinity with such men and such deeds. Great impulses and heroic traits, long dormant, almost crushed out, perhaps, by the manifold pettiness of modern civic life, assert themselves for the moment, and carry men away in a fine enthusiasm. All this is attested by the rapt, almost painful interest depicted on the upturned faces, and by the applause which seems to come as a matter of course, and half-unconsciously.

But the climax comes when, at the end of his discourse, the lecturer reads Tennyson's *Revenge*. There is scarcely a man in the room who has ever heard of the poem in his life before, much less read it.

The experiment is a very interesting one. Here is a poem, a national ballad, written so as to make its direct appeal to the deepest sympathies and emotions of the plain, ordinary Englishman. Whatever may be wrong with a man, his capacity to appreciate this poem, at a first hearing, implies that there is a good deal right with him. It implies that those sympathies and emotions to which this poem makes a direct appeal are untampered with, and that is saying much.

The nerves of the audience have, by now, been tuned to the proper pitch, and the poem is listened to in almost breathless silence, save when a passage here and there makes its irresistible appeal, and summons forth the applause that cannot be restrained.

The applause, when it came, was delivered with such striking unanimity, that one could not refrain from noting such passages as elicited it, and drawing one's own conclusions therefrom.

The first of these passages was that referring to the sick men ashore :—

“ For we brought them all aboard,
And they blessed him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.”

The next was in the following stanza :—

“ And Sir Richard said again : ‘ We be all good English men,
Let us hang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turned my back upon Don or devil yet.’ ”

Nor did the concluding lines of the eleventh stanza escape :—

“ Sink me the ship, Master Gunner, sink her, split her in twain !
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain ! ”

When the end comes a perfect ovation breaks out, such as accompanies the outlet of feeling long pent up. Men at once begin to discuss it. They are mainly struck by the fact that the ballad records an actual event. That men, Englishmen, ever existed, equal to so great a deed, is almost enough to stagger comprehension. The enterprise was mad, hopeless; but all that is forgiven by the greatness of the escapade, the terrible humour of it.

One man cannot get over his regret at the absence of Lord Thomas Howard.

"Why, if he had only been at the fight with his five ships, we would have *won!*"

We did not dissent, for we had the temerity to believe that what he said was true.

Of the one hundred and fifty-five metropolitan clubs in affiliation with the Union this year, eighty-one have Sunday lectures; many of these, however, have lectures on week-days as well.

It is common amongst political clubs, where more educational work is done, to arrange a lecture for every alternate Sunday, and often for one week-day evening as well. Others, again, have a lecture every Sunday morning, and, occasionally, one during the week. During the summer months, however, when weather is fine, clubs are less frequented, and the lectures are usually less regular, and this applies to club-fixtures of all kinds except excursions to places of interest in London and the country, which are naturally very popular at this time of year.

The majority of these lectures, as will have already been inferred, are on questions of current politics, and commonly relating to some aspect or other of the social problem.

The attendance at such lectures is extremely variable, much depending upon the state of the weather and the

reputation of the lecturer. It is almost impossible to secure even a workable average, since all varieties of number occur between fifteen and two hundred. The latter number, again, will sometimes be exceeded if a magic-lantern is used at an evening lecture.

But apart from lectures, classes are held at which such subjects as shorthand, book-keeping, and even French are taught. But the most popular and significant of these is the Ambulance Class.

The thirty-first Annual Report for the year 1892-93 contains the following statement under the heading "Ambulance Classes":—

"These useful classes have been in operation during the year at an increasing number of clubs, and the limited apparatus, diagrams, etc., of the Union have been in great demand. Amongst the principal clubs which have formed Ambulance Classes this year are the Deptford Liberal Club, Romilly Club, Mildmay Radical Club, North Camberwell Progressive Club, Bryanston Club, Central Finsbury Radical Club. These clubs have all passed and have obtained first-class certificates, whilst the Boro' of Hackney Club has twice secured that honour this year."

But besides lectures and classes we must not neglect to estimate the importance of club libraries. Of the one hundred and forty-four metropolitan clubs sending in returns this year, no fewer than one hundred and nine have libraries. In this estimate we exclude such clubs as are supplied with books from the Union in lieu of a library of their own. The sixty-seven political clubs number between them 28,292 volumes, with an average per club of 422 volumes. The forty-two social clubs, strange to say, have a far better record, the total number of volumes in these clubs amounting to 36,124, giving per club the remarkably good average of 860 volumes.

Statistics of this nature are, however, but little helpful in judging of the educational value of club libraries.

Like so many other things, these libraries suggest great possibilities. All contain a fair percentage of standard works, and it is interesting to note that among the novels, which are more patronised than any other part of the library, are usually to be found the works of Dickens, George Eliot, and Kingsley. The "modern novel" has not yet found its way hither.

Shakespeare usually figures on the shelves, but poetry, as a rule, has little vogue. A good deal of space is taken up by wonderful and out-of-date histories of England and other odds and ends of literature, chosen without much genius for selection. We were strangely moved, upon one occasion, when we discovered a copy of Cicero's Letters in an East-End Club.

Almost all books are regarded with reverence by the club-man, nor does he seek to convert this reverence into contempt by an undue familiarity.

The London workman, like the bulk of his countrymen, does not read much beside the newspaper.

All this, however, is no argument against club libraries. No one will deny that they are of *some* use. All we would do is to warn our readers not to expect too much. After a long and, often, exhausting day's work, it is not to be wondered at that a man prefers a quiet chat with a friend, or a game of billiards, to the perusal of a dry, and, frequently, ill-printed book.

But apart from the efforts of individual clubs in the direction of education, we must not omit to touch upon the work done in this matter at the Club and Institute Union itself.

The library at the Union has enjoyed a long tradition of usefulness. It is the result of loving and unremitting toil. The volumes that line its shelves are judiciously selected, and much of the very best in literature and research has found its way hither.

Of course it is not made use of to such an extent as it should be, but the same very valid reason for comparative

neglect obtains here as in the case of the club libraries and the free public libraries. But the hopes which inspired its creation and developed its growth, although to an extent unfulfilled, are by no means unwarranted.

Moreover, the actual benefits conferred by the Club Union library are apt to be overlooked. It is not in London, where classes, technical schools, and free Libraries abound that its sphere of usefulness is properly emphasised. The following extract from the thirty-first Annual Report will serve to illustrate this :—

“The boxes of the Circulating Library have been eagerly sought by the Provincial Clubs during the time available. One hundred and twenty-eight of these boxes were issued, each containing 34 volumes. From the sheets sent with them it appears that, on an average, each book is read about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times, so that the circulation can safely be put down at more than 10,000.

In this connection it should be remembered that these boxes are seldom sought for by the metropolitan clubs, these having libraries of their own.”

The Annual Report for 1891-92 contains the following statement relating to a fresh development of educational activity :—

“A suggestion to form a Club Union Economic and Discussion Society in connection with the Union has been adopted. It is proposed that members of the society should meet together periodically at some central place—in the new Union premises when completed—for the systematic discussion of economic and social questions of interest to the community ; and that occasional lectures by eminent men upon these subjects and upon educational work generally, be arranged by the society. It is hoped that the society will be the means of bringing into closer contact with each other the many men in our clubs who are keenly interested in questions of this character, and who, by regularly meeting together, will not only secure a great deal of intellectual enjoyment for themselves, but

will probably be the means of promoting similar societies in the local clubs. It is proposed that the society be under the management of the Educational Committee, and that it shall form part of the educational work of the Union in its new buildings.

"We now ask those members who are willing to join with us in this work to at once send their names and addresses and club to the Secretary of the Union, together with a fee of sixpence, as a subscription for the first year, and so soon as sufficient names have been enrolled an inaugural meeting will be convened, at which some leading public man will be invited to preside."

During the following year, however, when the removal from 150 Holborn to the new offices in the Clerkenwell Road took place, the educational work of the Union, like much of its other work, was for a short time interrupted. We read, for instance in the thirty-first Annual Report, under the heading "Educational Work":—

"This, as much as any branch of our work, has obviously suffered by reason of the removal to new offices, the time at which it is developed being just those months when the staff was occupied in preparations for departure. Notably the preparations for commencing a Club Union Economic and Discussion Society had to be suspended. Steps are, however, being taken to revive this, now that a room suitable for its purpose can be placed at its disposal. We shall be glad if members interested in this development will forward their names to the Secretary of the Union prior to the inaugural meeting to be held in October."

The current Annual Report, however, published July 1894, shows that this temporary and unavoidable disorganisation has been amply atoned for. The education work occupies here a prominent position.

We read under the heading "Educational Work," that "in this important branch of the Union's work the establishment of the Central Buildings has helped to a great revival."

The Report then goes on to show how, "apart from the educational work accomplished by the Union, it has acted as *a means of communication** between the greater educational bodies and those workmen whom they desire to reach. We have thus sought by every possible means to call the attention of our members to the excellent system of scholarships offered by the Technical Education Board of the London County Council." Immediately after we read,— "We have also undertaken to distribute amongst the London clubs a series of papers by the Recreative Evening Schools Association, and have joined in a memorial to the London School Board asking :—

"(1.) That all evening schools should be free, or practically free, by the return of fees to those who attend regularly.

"(2.) That the classes should be much more largely advertised in every district.

"(3.) That working people may be associated in the management of these schools, and may in this capacity have definite duties assigned to them (especially in visiting absentees and arranging for special lectures and entertainments), such as are undertaken by working-men managers under the Nottingham School Board.

"(4.) That far more of the social and recreative element may be introduced as a regular feature in connection with these schools.

"(5.) And that in co-operation with the Technical Education Board, or otherwise, far greater facilities may be given for elementary technical instruction."

However we may criticise these five suggestions, we cannot but hail the spirit which prompts them. The second and third suggestions would, we imagine, invite the hearty approval of thoughtful men. One result of this appeal to the School Board has been that, in addition to the number of clubmen appointed through other agencies, thirteen have been appointed school managers.

* The italics are our own.

Under the heading "The English Citizen" we read :—

"A course of lectures with this title was delivered by Mr Graham Wallas at the Co-operative Wholesale Society's rooms in Leman Street. The Union was able to supply some forty or fifty class books for the use of this course from its Reference Library."

To return to the work done at the Union itself, we read that "the Library, owing to the provision of a reading-room at the Central Club, and the connection of the Union with other workmen's organisations, has been much more extensively used this year than hitherto."

The Circulating Library, too, has progressed. It has received considerable additions during the year, also "the demand for the book boxes has been greater than ever. One hundred and forty-six of these boxes were issued during the year, representing a circulation (calculated from the 'returns of readers' sent with each box) of over 11,000."

Eleven free illustrated lectures were given at the Central Hall on scientific and historical subjects during December, January, February, and March, and were appreciated by crowded and attentive audiences. We read that "as an outcome of these the Union has been able to arrange for a definite series of science lectures at the clubs." The following clubs have been chosen for these courses: The South Bermondsey, the Eleusis, the Boro' of Hackney, and the Carlyle; and they are to be followed by a longer and complete course in the Union Hall.

The Ambulance Class, as usual, has had a very successful year; nor, since we seem to be launched upon a catalogue, should we omit to mention the existence and, so far, successful careers of the Elementary French Class, the Shorthand Class, and the Instrumental Music Class.

Then we come to the Economic Class, the temporary suspension of which we alluded to before. We read, however, in the current Report that "the Economic Class has been fortunate in securing Dr J. Bonar, LL.D., as Presi-

dent for the year. On the advice of the President, given in his inaugural address, the work of the session has been confined to the reading and discussion of Professor Marshall's 'Economics of Industry.' It is gratifying to note that many of the most active men in the movement have now joined this class." The annual examination has attracted more this year than ever before; forty-nine competed.

The temporary suspension of educational work has acted as a real incentive to more vigorous effort.

The educational work organised at the Club and Institute Union, is, we think, capable of considerable development.

Practically speaking, the machinery required for various enterprises of usefulness in this direction is at hand; all that is wanted is the enthusiasm to vitalise it. This was well brought out by Mr Hodgson Pratt, now for so many years President of the Union, and to whom workmen owe much more than many of them dream of.

On September 30, 1893, was held the annual meeting at the Club Union Hall. Mr Pratt, as President, delivered upon this occasion his annual speech to the assembled delegates. This speech, excellent as it is all through, contained certain passages which workmen, and more especially club-men, should never forget. Referring to the migration into the new premises, he said:—"The first topic which I have to bring before you is suggested by the great event which has just taken place in this, the thirty-first year, of the Club and Institute Union. I refer, of course, to the fact that you have entered into possession of your own handsome premises, providing as they do for the accomplishment of many objects of great public importance. This Union has from the outset cherished a great ideal as to the purpose of its existence. It was formed not only to show forth the value of workmen's clubs and institutes as places of recreation and society, and as an agency of social and political progress, and

not only to give advice and aid in their organisation and maintenance. It was also intended to be a centre where representatives of the clubs should meet for conference and discussion, both with one another and also with representatives of all movements connected with the well-being of the people. It was always our intention, indeed, that, in this interchange of ideas, of experience, and of knowledge, there should be no distinction whatever of class or occupation, trade or profession. We desired that the Union should be a great centre for receiving and diffusing knowledge on all questions affecting the industrial population. We accordingly commenced at a very early period of our history to organise conferences at Exeter Hall, in the hall of the Society of Arts, at our own offices, and elsewhere. Very competent men, some of them members of either House of Parliament, leading Trade Unionists, Social and Political Reformers, literary men and others, attended those meetings, because they believed that the Union afforded a platform open to all alike for the free expression of ideas, a common ground where men of the most opposite kinds of training and experience, and of the most opposite beliefs, might see each other eye to eye, and try to understand each other on a footing of absolute independence, toleration, and fairplay.

“When in those days the proposal of a central hall and model club was first brought forward, provision for such conferences and lectures on a large and permanent scale, under the auspices of the Union, was one of our main objects; but we could not raise the necessary funds, and gradually this part of our work fell off, because of the difficulty of finding adequate accommodation.

“I refer to this matter, not for the sake of historical reminiscences, but in order that you may know how long ago it was desired by members of the Union to accomplish certain great purposes which you now possess the means of carrying out effectively. I am sure that you will be

alive to your responsibilities, and that during many years to come you and your successors will have an opportunity of hearing lectures and addresses from eminent thinkers, writers, statesmen, and leaders of opinion in all branches of social and political science. I think it highly important that the Union should render this service to the community. One great and exceptional merit of the Union is its many-sided and impartial character. It belongs to no party or creed. It is identified with no special and limited or sectional purpose. On its platform men of various opinions can meet on an equal footing. The Union can therefore render an immense service in thus making it possible for earnest men of all schools of thought to meet and listen to each other without fear or favour."

This extract fairly illustrates our meaning when we say that the machinery required for developing education in various directions is ready and at hand. Mr Pratt shows us in what directions we are to expect developments. It remains to be seen to how great an extent members of the Club and Institute Union will avail themselves of those advantages to gain which they have toiled so hard and so long.

We see, then, that educational work of some sort or other is carried on both in the clubs themselves, and at the Club and Institute Union. Much of it may be open to criticism, but we must always bear in mind, that whatever the Club and Institute Union may be, the clubs which belong to it must not be regarded as educational institutions, nor must their educational work, such as it is, be judged from that point of view. A club is primarily a place for relaxation and amusement, and though this does not apply so forcibly to a Political Club yet no one will regard even a Political Club as a classroom. Any educational work that is done in a workman's club should rather be regarded with approbation than censured for its shortcomings. It is, in a way, a

work of supererogation, and, as such, invites the spirit of approval rather than of criticism.

It seems to be in the nature of things that work of this sort should be more successful at the Union itself than in the clubs. There are many obvious reasons for this, but the most potent cause is contained in the fact that the Club and Institute Union is more in contact with the cultivated world than its branches can hope to be. Again, the officers and managers of the Union are the best men chosen from the affiliated clubs; the delegates who meet there periodically are the pick of the local clubs. The council and committees are formed from the same sources. The *elite* of club-land is picked out to perform the many necessary duties that must be carried on at head-quarters.

It is natural, therefore, and right, that all organising work should be accomplished here with greater ability and success; and this, of course, applies to the educational sphere of organisation. Again, such classes, debates, lectures, or discussions as are held at the premises in Clerkenwell will be attended only by the more enterprising spirits of the metropolitan clubs. The less ambitious will be content with what their own club can afford them. Therefore we agree entirely with Mr Hodgson Pratt in what we conceive would be his propaganda here. We believe that the new premises of the Union provide "for the accomplishment of many objects of great public importance," that "the Union should be a great centre for receiving and diffusing knowledge on all questions affecting the industrial population." We believe that a proper enthusiasm will make this ideal possible of realisation. There seems to be a legitimate scope for such objects here.

But in the clubs themselves the case, generally speaking, is different. Some, indeed, have extensive premises and unusual facilities for educational work, but this is not the rule. Then again, the ordinary club-man, like

the ordinary everybody else, is not particularly devoted to the cause of education. To begin with, his knowledge on general subjects is not extensive. Lectures on English literature, science, history, or economics do not profoundly interest him. He would rather *not* go to a lecture. Very likely he would understand but little of it, and what he understood he would quickly forget. A lecture teaches him nothing, or next to nothing. Usually, it does not even encourage him to read. He has little time for reading, and, like most of his fellows, less inclination.

It is indeed surprising, considering these circumstances, that such good audiences are forthcoming at club lectures.

The main object of a lecturer in a workmen's club should be not so much to instruct as to rouse. He should always remember that his audience is not only uninstructed but untrained. An isolated lecture on history, literature, or science comes like a ray of light in comparative darkness, and can do little or no good. It has no context, and presents no relation to anything in particular. Even continuous courses do very little good. Theories and epitomes are useless or worse, when the audience is incapable of criticising the theory or of amplifying the epitome.

It should be further brought into consideration that those who compose these audiences are adults—many of them old and grey-headed, most of them past the age at which instruction is of paramount value. Unaccustomed to read from their youth up, it is almost fatuous to suppose that a course or courses of lectures will lead them, perhaps in middle life, to adopt a habit so new and so uncongenial.

The chief services rendered to a club by lectures, although considerable, are indirect. If they take the place of entertainments, they save the club a vast amount of expense, and the members from the enjoy-

ment of much innocent vulgarity. Again, lectures give the club a certain standing in the neighbourhood, and serve as a guarantee of respectability, which, although usually unnecessary, is—considering the uncertainty of most people's knowledge respecting these clubs—none the less useful.

Beneficial results such as these are alone sufficient to make it desirable that lectures, and as many as possible, should be delivered in clubs ; only let no one hope or expect that the intellects of workmen will be much expanded thereby.

But this brings us back to a point that was suggested at the beginning of this chapter. It was there hinted that there are other things to appeal to in a workman besides his intellect. His intellect, as we know, is untrained, and his opportunity for reading as scant as his inclination. His emotions also are untrained, or rather untampered with. His taste has neither been trained, nor interfered with. Here, at any rate, there is virgin soil. As he knows little about books, so he knows less about music and poetry. In both cases alike there is lack of training, but the latter case is consistent with the happy concomitant—lack of perversion or false training. That this is true there is, fortunately, abundant evidence. Instances of this we have noticed even at lectures.

If an average London workman prides himself upon anything, it is upon two things : firstly, that he is superior to the emotions of patriotism ; secondly, that he is a despiser of religion, or, as he thinks, superior to it. Yet such a lecture as that described at the beginning of this chapter, generally speaking, arouses far more enthusiasm than the ordinary outpourings upon current and local politics.

Quack politicians and tub-orators would do their best to persuade these men that their views and sympathies are such as would earn for them the title of "Little

Englanders," and they actually do succeed in gulling their hearers into that belief about themselves. They appeal, however, to their intellects—their untrained intellects—only, and the disease, if such it may be called, is but skin deep. Their genuine emotions are unimpaired.

As to the second point—their contempt for religion—an interesting comment was supplied by the lecture described at the beginning of this chapter. In the course of his address, the lecturer had occasion to allude to certain acts of generosity and forbearance on the part of Drake. He mentioned that he gave orders that no women or children should be injured, and that *the churches* should not be interfered with. Strange to say, this order respecting the churches was greeted with a round of applause!

The reading of Tennyson's *Revenge* has already been dwelt upon, but that is only a solitary instance of what may frequently occur. Many a lecturer has won applause by quoting a passage of simplicity and grandeur, whether of prose or poetry, during an address which has, otherwise, roused no great enthusiasm.

But, as a rule, only occasional glimpses of what we mean are discoverable at lectures. Their object, primarily, is to instruct, and, for the most part, they miss their purpose. We said just now that the workman knows little or nothing of poetry and music; it is nevertheless true that some of the best music, and some of the best poetry appeals to him strongly. Simplicity and grandeur are qualities in art which affect him most profoundly, and both these qualities are characteristic of some of the highest forms of art. Thus it is we find that much of Shakespeare's poetry and much of Handel's music is deeply appreciated by working-class audiences. Recitations or readings of some of the simplest yet greatest passages in our literature will keep such an audience spell-bound. The simple and true is what touches them, because, however untrained and unde-

veloped their intellects may be, yet their emotional side rings true, and is responsive to the best calls.

In this respect their weakness is their strength.

In this direction, we think, there is scope for much enterprise. It would, indeed, be advisable that lectures and genuine educational work should be carried on by the Union in their new premises at Clerkenwell. There is a real chance that such work may thrive effectively at the head-quarters of this institution. In the clubs themselves, the successful classes should be carried on, but we cannot help thinking that great advantage would be reaped by frequently substituting ballad concerts, and good recitations or readings for the ordinary cut and dried lecture. Under the present system there is little or no chance of the lecture usurping the place of the usual club entertainment, which, although perfectly harmless, is usually terribly dull and stupid. Were, however, such an alteration made, it is quite possible that a revolution in these entertainments might be gradually brought about. The taste of the workman would, meantime, be educated, and his best and soundest instincts aroused and developed.

CHAPTER VI.

WHY CLUBS FAIL.

It is sometimes rather difficult to keep an accurate register of all the clubs belonging to the Club and Institute Union.

Every member of the Union is supplied, on paying his first subscription, with a book which contains a list with addresses of all the clubs in the Union, both metropolitan and provincial. This list, however, cannot always be absolutely relied on. A club becomes affiliated to the Union, and sometime after, perhaps, it fails, and is never again heard of; or again, more commonly, it leaves the premises it was occupying and migrates to another district, taking with it some of its furniture, its library, and a certain bulk of its members. It may start in its new locality with a new name. It is practically a new club.

But club migration is not always caused by failure. Some migrate owing to their increased prosperity. They find their present premises too small, or unsuited to their needs, and, rather than build on to an unsatisfactory edifice, they find it more convenient to start again in a building better suited to their requirements.

But apart from such changes as these, we are still confronted with the fact that clubs belonging to the Union are occasionally dropping out and ceasing to exist, though, on the other hand, new clubs come into existence to take their place. In spite of the security and permanence of so many clubs, there is always a

fringe of failures—clubs spring up and die out again ; not even do their bar-takings avail to keep them going.

The twenty-ninth Annual Report for the year 1890-91 gives a list of twenty-one clubs which were removed from the Union, but it is not quite clear in the case of all why such removal took place. The only light thrown upon the matter is derived from one of the opening sentences of the Report, the significance of which is somewhat vague : " Fifty-nine new clubs have been admitted to the Union, and twenty-one have ceased to exist or been removed from our list, leaving the present membership of the Union at 422 clubs." It is quite clear from page 34 of the same Report that twenty-one clubs have been removed from the list, but we cannot tell whether *all* had ceased to exist, or whether, in the case of some, another cause led to their removal from the Union.

The Report for the following year, however, is much more explicit. We learn from Appendix C of this Report that no fewer than forty-seven clubs have been removed from the list of members, and in each case the cause of removal is stated. We are thus supplied with information which materially assists an inquiry into the causes of failure.

The following three causes are here operative in the removal of clubs from the Union register—Non-payment of fee ; the fact of a club having been closed ; and expulsion.

Non-payment of fee caused the removal of no fewer than twenty-eight of these clubs. Eighteen were closed, and one was expelled.

The thirty-first Annual Report is no less explicit on this head. During the year 1892-93 twenty-four clubs were removed from the list of members, and their removal is due to practically the same causes. Fourteen failed to pay their fee to the Union, eight were closed, one was expelled, and one withdrew.

During 1893-94 seventeen clubs were removed from

the list. Two causes only were operative in their removal this year.* Twelve were closed, and four failed to pay their fee.

Omitting from our calculations the year 1890-91, when the causes of removal were not stated, we find that, during the three following years, no less than eighty-eight clubs have been struck off the Union lists, and that out of these eighty-eight, thirty-eight have collapsed. "Non-payment" of fee is, however, the most usual cause of removal, forty-six clubs forfeiting membership by refusal to comply with this necessary condition.

We know, then, that thirty-eight clubs belonging to the Union failed during three years. It is probable that more met with a similar fate. "Non-payment" of fee usually points to financial embarrassment, and financial embarrassment usually ends in collapse. There are, of course, many causes of club failure, but there are three which deserve special notice; they are:—

Firstly: Poverty of the district in which a club is started.

Secondly: General slackness of members, and lack of corporate spirit.

Thirdly: Misconduct of members.

It is worth while calling attention to the first of these causes, because it is one of the most common sources of failure. Enterprise frequently miscalculates its means, and, with no special blame attaching to anybody, failure is the result.

Unfortunately, however, such failures are not always unaccompanied by acts of dishonesty. The means of life are, generally speaking, rather precarious in the case of a workman, and very much so in the case of the poorer sort. A week's lack of employment may frequently mean ruin unless ready money is to be found,

* In the case of one club the cause of removal is not stated.

and the unlucky official to whom the club funds are entrusted is sorely put to it in the time of need. His intention is merely to quietly "borrow" the money, in order to keep himself from beggary, and his children from hunger. Luck is sure to turn soon, and then all can be restored, and nothing known. But, somehow or other, the opportunity for repayment is long in coming, and meantime the club committee meets, and the accounts are inspected. The money is demanded, but cannot be found; the club is ruined, and the man disgraced.

In judging of such cases as these, it is surely hard not to temper condemnation with mercy.

The second cause—that of slackness on the part of members, and the general lack of the corporate spirit—is one which is so natural that one scarcely knows how to condemn it without going too far. It is the old story of the few good and the many indifferent, which seems to apply with considerable force to all classes in society.

The main difference is that where one class in society is already handicapped by poverty and the struggle for existence, the unkind laws of life make such indifference and slackness more telling in their results, while, on the other hand, the efforts of the best tend to be proportionately cancelled in their effects. This, no doubt, is a very unjust dispensation, yet it has to be faced.

It is on this account that the secretaries of Trades' Unions, and the secretaries of clubs in London, and of other workmen's organisations, are always complaining of the lack of support that they get from the members of such organisations. The whole burden of responsibility is thrown too much upon the officials and a few self-denying individuals who give up time and energy for the benefit of their fellows. Plenty of object-lessons in illustrations of this are offered by the clubs themselves. Most members of clubs, for instance, would agree

with the theory that it is useful, from many points of view, that lectures should be given in clubs. Acting on this assumption, the secretary engages the services of a lecturer who, perhaps, has spent time and trouble in preparation for the event, and may have had to travel many miles to fulfil his engagement. It frequently happens that he finds a paltry audience of twenty or thirty people ; it occasionally happens that no audience at all is forthcoming, although plenty of members are actually in the club at the time ; and he returns home angry and disappointed, vowing vengeance against workmen's clubs in general and this club in particular. The probable result is that his services are lost forever, so far as the Club Movement is concerned, and his wrath may even urge him to relate his grievance in a leading newspaper. But who cares?—and this is the most unfortunate part of the whole thing—not the ordinary member ; he does not care an egg so long as his next Saturday entertainment is secure, or he can lay his hand on his favourite newspaper, or secure a corner by the fire at a game of whist ! The people who care are the unfortunate secretary, the president of the club, and a few others who have the interest of the club, and the club-movement, at heart. These are the men who, by their energy and intelligence, are largely instrumental in keeping the club together, and who preserve it from a general slackness of management and looseness of administration which would ruin it in six months. Nor are such men to be blamed if they see fit to transfer their abilities to another club where they may be more appreciated, or if they dissociate themselves from club-land altogether.

There is little doubt that instances of a like spirit of indifference will be found in other workmen's organisations. The mass not only shirks responsibility, but often refuses to be moved by the results of its indifference.

With respect to the third cause, it is somewhat of a

relief to consider that a club can be destroyed as well as partially supported by the sale of intoxicants. If a club takes to bad ways in this respect, as well as in others, the usual result is collapse. If an element of insubordination or rowdiness gets the upper hand in a club the seeds of decay are inevitably sown. The growth of disease is obvious and easily traced. The club soon becomes a bye-word in the neighbourhood. This means that any new members who join are drawn from the baser sort, while the better members are fain to seek refuge in a club more suited to their taste. This is tantamount to the withdrawal of administrative ability. Educational work has no chance, money is lavished upon entertainments, accounts are neglected or badly kept. Speculation may occur, and, sooner or later, financial ruin ensues. In such cases it is probable that "non-payment of fee" will have severed its connection with the Union before its final collapse takes place, if it has meantime escaped the extreme measure of expulsion.

The failure of clubs has sometimes been used as an indictment against the Club Movement, which has included the Club and Institute Union. This, however, should not be pressed too far. Of the three causes of failure we drew attention to, the first is by far the most common, and failures such as these are frequently in no way connected with the Club and Institute Union. A club, for instance, that is started in a very poor neighbourhood, frequently dies before it has found its footing, and there are two very practical reasons why such clubs often fail to obtain the privilege of affiliation to the Union. In the first place, they are frequently compelled to resort to the brewers for a loan, and this transaction would render them ineligible for membership; and, secondly, the monthly subscription of each member must amount to sixpence at least, or the club will apply in vain for affiliation. Again, the increased severity of scrutiny, imposed by the authorities of the Union, renders it more

than ever a matter of difficulty for a club, whose position is financially insecure, to obtain membership. Many such clubs, therefore, that spring up and die are in no wise connected with the Club and Institute Union, and are therefore beyond the scope of our inquiry. During two years (1891-1893) we have pointed out that only twenty-six clubs belonging to the Union are *known* to have failed. We hinted that others may have collapsed after having been struck from the list of members, but with them we are not directly concerned. The failure of twenty-six clubs in two years is not a matter for very great concern, especially when we remember what difficulties threaten the existence of poor men's clubs which are self-supporting, and when we call to mind that the total membership of the Union at that time consisted of about 400 clubs.

As to the other two causes which were adverted to in this context, they are simply typical weaknesses to which any organisation is liable in some form or another; nor should it be a matter of special comment if inherent weaknesses occasionally prevail and bring about their natural results, especially when, as has been shown, such results are essentially of a purging nature. It is well that a club, or any branch of any institution, that has a fatal disease, should, thanks to its own deficiencies, cease to exist; the spread of contamination is thereby avoided, and the organisation as a whole is benefited rather than injured.

That such cases of failure are comparatively rare in the case of the Club and Institute Union is a matter for sincere congratulations; that such weakness, where it develops, results in such consequences as we have shown, is by no means an unfavourable comment upon the methods of the organisation with which we are concerned.

CHAPTER VII.

AN HOUR AT A CLUB.

"Book, sir, please!"—then in an undertone—"Is your friend a member, sir?"

"No; but I want him to be shown over the club. Is Mr Jones free? because, if so, he can take care of him."

"Yes, sir; you'll find him in the library."

This colloquy takes place with the door-keeper at the entrance of the club.

I have no power to take my friend, who belongs to no club in the Union, into any club save my own, although, as a member of the Union, I may enter any club myself that is associated to that body.* He must be the guest of some financial member of the club we propose to inspect.

So we hurry through the bar, pass through the reading-room, and enter the library, where we find Mr Jones absorbed in accounts, for the post of Secretary to a large club of perhaps 700 members is by no means a sinecure.

Can he spare us quarter of an hour?

Yes, if we will let him finish this column.

We do not wait long. Mr Jones' fingers run up a couple of columns, and his head appears to take no notice of the matter at all. Calculation seems to ooze from the finger-tips. His head might be composing an ode or planning a ballooning excursion.

"Now, sir."

I introduce my friend, who has ceased to be my guest

* See chap. iii. pp. 28, "Associate Card."

on first entering the club. He is now under the protection of Mr Jones, and we are ready to start on our tour of inspection.

But we must stop a moment to examine the library. It is large and well looked after. There are about 800 volumes on the shelves, which are behind glass, and the cases are carefully locked, being opened only when books are borrowed or replaced.

Mr Jones is always ready to show visitors over the premises. This club, as he is explaining to my friend, is one of the very few which were, in the first instance, built as club-premises. The majority of workmen's clubs were originally ordinary houses, sometimes warehouses, which have been altered or enlarged to suit the requirements of the members, and, as a rule, entail the payment of heavy rents to the owners.

This building, however, is the property of shareholders. And the majority of shareholders are the members of the club. As is to be expected, the accommodation is more convenient and adequate in such a building. On the ground-floor, for instance, are the library, the reading-room, the bar, and the lavatories. The library and reading-room are separate, whereas in many clubs one room serves for both. The bar is placed in a large and well-ventilated room, and the lavatories are admirably suited to the requirements of a large club.

We leave the ground-floor and descend to the basement. There is not much to be seen here save the coal stores and skittle alley, so we remount the stairs, pass the entrance to the bar, and proceed to the first floor. Here Mr Jones shows us into the hall, which is already beginning to fill for the entertainment. I secure a penny programme, and our conductor gets one for himself and another for his guest. The hall is large, well-lighted, and well-ventilated. There are a couple of doors for members, and a couple of possible exits for artistes at the stage end of the room.

Benches are arranged, and there is accommodation for

about 500 people. There is a hose in working order at the back of the stage, which can be made use of at any moment in the event of fire.

The performance begins. The chairman bangs the table with a little hammer, and announces that "Mr So-and-so will now oblige with such-and-such." A flourish is given on the piano, and a boyish-looking young man steps upon the stage, with one hand upon his hip and the other gracefully extended in the direction of the audience. His appearance causes a round of applause. Indeed, he is a wonderful object. He wears a white flannel coat, and no waistcoat; but he has a beautiful shirt-front and a vast tie. There is a belt round his stomach, his trousers are rather short, and tight round the hips and ankles. There is a large red mark on each cheek. His eyebrows are elaborate, but seem badly balanced; the wig is black and low upon the forehead. He takes a couple of capers up and down the stage, and begins to sing. Seated at the back of the room, it is a little difficult to get at the gist of the song, but so far as we can gather, its subject is based upon the difficulty of adjusting relations between himself and the policeman. He and the policeman take different points of view upon so many questions, that an inherent incompatibility of temper is suggested. The song, therefore, is very long. Each point of difference occupies a whole verse, and each verse has a chorus.

So soon as this effort is concluded we slip out and continue our exploration of the premises. The second floor is occupied by the billiard-room. This is a spacious apartment and holds four billiard tables, all of which are occupied. Over the fire-place stands a handsome pier-glass, a trophy won by the club in one of the billiard competitions between the clubs. The tables are in fairly good order, one being especially well kept.

The play is on the whole good; the games are keenly contested by the players and narrowly watched by on-

lookers, while others are chatting together or waiting until a table shall be left vacant.

We have not, however, seen everything yet. Another flight of stairs brings us to the third floor. Here our conductor shows us the committee-room. It is a small business-like looking room with a dozen chairs and a table covered with green baize. We pass through a door on the left and find ourselves upon the flat roof of the club. This is rather a novelty, and one of which Mr Jones is rather proud. The club is a lofty building, and a capital view is obtained of lamp-lit London. We are in the vicinity of Great Eastern Street, and the roof on which we are standing is almost as elevated as the tallest of the great fabrics that line that thoroughfare.

This roof is made use of in the summer-time when the usual downpour of rain has for the moment expended itself. Its breezy heights are not much to the taste of the London workmen at any other time of the year.

We have seen everything now, and descend to the warmer regions of the bar.

But on the way down we are constrained to take another peep at the entertainment.

A young lady, arrayed in gorgeous colours, has just begun a rhythmical account of an afternoon she spent on the river. She has, apparently, multitudes of admirers, and endless methods of making them feel abashed. It follows that the verses of the song are as endless as the number of admirers, and this song, too, is a very long one. But when, at last, she has finished, she is vociferously applauded, and compelled to "oblige" again. This time she sings a sad, pathetic song, but it is shorter than the other.

She is followed by two young fellows, one of whom is that policeman's bugbear, and the other looks equally intrepid. But the *rôle* is changed now, for they figure in the more buoyant, though less bellicose, character of dancers. They keep time very well with the music, and

the effects of their accuracy are emphasised by a little arrangement in the shoe which produces a crisp and clanking sound. They wear straw hats, and the wigs are discarded.

When the dance is over we slip out and make straight for the bar.

Here we sit down, and Mr Jones procures a glass of beer for my friend. As an affiliated member of the Union I obtain a like luxury for myself, together with a cigar.

At the bar of this club no money may be paid over the counter. The following system is adopted :—

At a corner of the room there is a tiny ticket office. Here you pay for what you want, and a ticket marked with the amount you have paid is given you. On presenting this at the bar you are served with what you require. Many clubs adopt this system. It is one of those slight, though useful, devices which tend, in their way, to promote orderliness and method where it is most required.

A neatly-dressed woman officiates at the bar. This is not an uncommon practice. My friend asks how it works, and is told that it answers in every way. The bar itself is kept more cleanly ; neatness and order are more apparent. Then, on the other hand, the conduct of members is affected ; they are less boisterous and noisy, they realise what is expected of them and act accordingly. They are, as it were, being put to the test, and are fully conscious of it. We have never come across or heard of a case where this plan has not been a success. This is another of those many devices which have been carefully devised in the interests of quiet and order.

The bar-room of this club, like that of so many others, is something more than a mere bar-room. It is a large apartment furnished with chairs and tables. There are bagatelle boards and card-tables, and plenty of members are trying their skill at both pursuits.

"What time do you close, Mr Jones?"

"Everybody has to be out by twelve, as the place is shut up then. Some clubs close earlier, at half-past eleven. But most close at the same time as the public-houses."

"Is there no regulation binding clubs to close at a certain hour?"

"None."

We bid the secretary good-night, and he returns to the library and to his accounts. The quarter of an hour we begged has extended to about sixty minutes.

CHAPTER VIII.

AMUSEMENTS.

WHEN we dealt with the educational work carried on by the Club and Institute Union, we found it convenient to deal separately with the work organised by the Union and that which was carried on in the clubs themselves.

It will be convenient to make a like distinction in dealing with club amusements.

If we glance through any of the Annual Reports we shall find that a great deal of space is devoted to notices concerning amusements. Perhaps the most important items in this context will be found under the heading "Saturday Visits," or, as some Reports have it, "The Saturday Afternoon Visits." It would, however, be unfair to regard these Saturday afternoon visits purely as amusements. Their object is to combine recreation and instruction, and to foster social intercourse as well. It is a little difficult to know under which category to place them. Since, however, in the Annual Reports they are kept apart from the educational work, it is best to regard them as falling under the head of Amusements.

The thirty-first Annual Report (1892-93) speaks of "these pleasant afternoons" as "affording opportunities to club-men to meet one another in joint search of recreation and instruction."

In the current Annual Report (1893-94) we read—"The Saturday afternoon visits, affording as they do opportunities for acquiring useful information while spending a pleasant afternoon, have been more numerous and more largely attended this year than has ever been the case before."

During 1892-93 about the usual number of such visits was organised. There were two visits to Newgate, a visit to "Venice" (Olympia), to the Tower Bridge, to Horniman's Museum, and to the Houses of Parliament. For this visit nearly two hundred names were received.

But the following year, as is stated by the Report, many more were organised. Two visits were made to Horniman's Museum; the Houses of Parliament were visited once, two hundred members being conducted over the buildings. Two visits were made to the training-ship *Shaftesbury*. "The ever-popular trip," says the Report, "to the training-ship *Shaftesbury* had this year to be twice repeated, owing to the enormous number of applications for tickets."

The visit to the Royal College of Surgeon's comes next. On this occasion over one hundred and fifty members attended, and listened "to Professor Stewart's charming lecturettes," adds the Report.

The Tower Bridge was twice visited; so was St Paul's Cathedral and Lord Brassey's Museum in Park Lane. "Some hundred and fifty club-men and their wives," says the Report, "availed themselves of Lord Brassey's invitation, on each occasion."

Visits, also, were made to the British Museum, the Greenwich Museum and Painted Hall, the Charterhouse, the Royal United Service Museum, the chief Fire Brigade Station, and Westminster Abbey.

Further developments are to be looked for in this direction. Under the heading "Visit to Antwerp" we read:—"Fired by the great success of these visits, the Union has now in view a larger scheme for carrying out a series of visits to the most interesting places on the Continent. The first arranged is to take place in July, Antwerp and other Belgian cities being the destination. By the kindness of Mr Hodgson Pratt, we hope also to be represented at the International Congress on Social

and Economic Problems, which is to take place at Antwerp in August next."

It is sincerely to be hoped that energy and enterprise such as this will meet with the success it deserves. The Union is indeed rendering services of untold value to its members by these methods which it employs of enlarging the horizon and enriching the lives of so many toilers. It is not, of course, to be hoped that the poorer amongst them will ever find their way across the sea to Antwerp or any other Continental town, but they will be put into direct touch with many of their more lucky friends who will thus have enlarged their experience. Club-life will be made so much the richer through the enterprise of these men; new channels of interest will be opened, and knowledge will be brought nearer home, and will be more accessible. The visits organised to places of interest in and about London have done much in this direction, nor can any extension of this form of activity fail to confer correspondingly increasing benefits.

The Union, however, is also responsible for organising what would come more directly under the head of Amusements.

A Section of the Annual Reports is always devoted to the subject of "Recreative Competitions."

We find that the favourite forms of recreation are rowing, cricket,* shooting, angling, billiards, athletic sports,† whist and cribbage. Annual contests in these diversions are arranged, and prizes are distributed to the winners, for which any club affiliated to the Union may compete.

Nor, lastly, should we omit to mention the Annual Concert and Ball, which is usually held in the Holborn Town Hall; and the Annual Dinner, which this year

* Note the following from the Current Annual Report—1893-94
"Rowing and Cricket—Although prizes were offered, there were not sufficient entries, and therefore no contests were held."

† No meeting is recorded for 1893-94.

(1894) was for the first time held in the new Hall belonging to the Club and Institute Union.

It is worth noticing here how much can be done in this way, and at how slight an expense. The Saturday afternoon visits, for instance, perhaps the most useful institution of all, frequently cost each visitor no more than the few pence required for his journey. At most it would be only necessary to add the slight outlay required if he wished for refreshments. Sometimes, however, still better fortune befalls the visitors. For on the occasion of the second visit to St Paul's Cathedral, we read in the current Annual Report: "Canon Scott-Holland again placed himself at the service of our members, and, at the conclusion of the tour round the building, entertained them to tea in the Chapter House." Kind hospitality such as this is by no means uncommon.

Let us now glance at the amusements that are organised by the clubs themselves.

Every club, or almost every club, has its billiard, bagatelle, and card tables. For a game of billiards a member would pay twopence or perhaps three-half-pence; this, and the little payments made for bagatelle and cards, help to swell the resources of the club.

All these forms of diversion are very popular, and it is a rare thing to find the billiard or bagatelle tables, more especially the former, lacking occupants.

Betting on these pastimes is rigorously guarded against; the most ambitious stake would be a glass of beer.

These games are carried on always with the most perfect quiet and good temper. We can recall a striking incident in illustration of this. A billiard contest was being fought out in a club in Shoreditch. The game was keenly contested by each representative of the two competing clubs. Towards the end of the encounter, when it was anyone's game, a slight misunderstanding occurred, due partly to the momentary carelessness of the marker.

No one, however, seemed quite certain as to the rights of the case, and in the discussion that followed both parties vied with each other in their anxiety to give way. And, although this mischance was, as far as anything could be, the cause which decided the issue of the game, no word of complaint or disapproval was raised by the man who was beaten nor by his friends.

It is a pity that more cannot be done by the clubs in the way of athletic exercise. It is not, however, difficult to see the obstacles which stand in the way.

Sundays excepted, most workmen are free only in the evening and on Saturday afternoons. Many find it impossible to avail themselves of even the one half-holiday. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that clubs find it difficult to organise and support cricket, rowing, and football clubs. Some, indeed, have their cricket and rowing teams, but they are practically the exceptions, as it is seldom that Saturday matches or contests can be arranged with anything like regularity.

In some clubs boxing and gymnastic exercises are carried on, and it would be well if this form of recreation became much more common. The physique of the ordinary London workman does not inspire one with awe. He is not often in "good training." He smokes a great deal, gets up early, and goes to bed late. He is not a drunkard, but his wind and liver would be improved if he drank less. It occasionally happens that his diet is irregular, and he is not always too well protected against the wet and cold. His existence, moreover, is complicated by the fact that he is living in a town where luxury and pleasure-seeking are especially common. For thousands of people West London is merely used as a pleasure haunt; for thousands of others East London is the home of toil. There are, as it were, two Londons—pleasure-seeking London, and labouring London. The London labourer, however, and here comes the rub, has caught the infection from the pleasure-seeker. Entertainments,

shows, amusement in any form, are the dearest delights of his heart ; he has the same restless craving for diversion, and almost the same dread of *ennui*. He has caught the disease from the West Londoner, and it is not to be wondered at, as it is everywhere in the air.

Perhaps this would not be a very serious thing were it not for the fact that it is unwise for a person with limited means to start too many cravings. If his cravings cannot be satisfied he is miserable, if they are satisfied he becomes impoverished.

This same infection makes him too much the victim of the convenient labour-saving contrivances of London. We do not allude here to the machinery to which he is tied during his hours of labour, but such things as tend to make his physical condition worse than it would be otherwise. We will content ourselves with one instance.

Now-a-days he cannot walk far, and will very frequently take a tram or a 'bus to spare his legs the trouble of trudging a ridiculously short distance. The cheapening of tram-fares has, of course, done much to deprive him of the most healthy form of exercise possible. One can hardly blame the London workman for being, more or less, the victim of circumstances, and in spite of all we have said, the fact that he is a *workman* at once attaches to his existence a dignity which sets him on a totally different platform from the mere pleasure-seeker. All we would do here is to point out that his physique is subjected to deteriorating influences, and that anything which exerts a counteracting force should be encouraged. It may, at first sight, seem somewhat out of place to suggest physical exercise as a form of recreation for a man who has been at work with his hands all day. In many cases, of course, sheer muscular fatigue demands complete rest after labour, but in thousands of cases, probably in the majority of cases, weariness after work hours, where it exists, is due to

monotony of toil rather than to any actual strain upon the muscles. The man comes home from stuffy workshops and factories, jaded rather than physically wearied, exhausted rather than healthily tired. He has, likely enough, been occupied with work that demands a monotonous concentration, without necessarily increasing his stock of muscle.

Such work as this, so different from the robust and varied toil of the farm-hand who spends the whole day in the open air, and makes more muscle than he wastes, is, generally speaking, wholly bad in its results upon a man's physique, and the deteriorating influences spoken of above, which affect a London workman more than a labourer in any other large town, tend to accelerate bad results.

There seems to be little reason why gymnastic exercises in clubs should not be developed to a very great extent. We have seen that real, often insuperable difficulties, interfere with rowing, cricket, and football, but in the case of gymnastics and boxing it is far otherwise. A cross-bar and boxing gloves and the slight equipment required for such exercise, could be obtained by most clubs, and half-an-hour's practice during the evening could easily be indulged in by many young club-men.

It is not likely that such a form of recreation would be unpopular. We know very well that in most boys' and youths' clubs, boxing, wrestling, and gymnastics are extremely popular. Nor has the Londoner any inherent objection to developing his muscles, provided his wind and digestion give him no particular trouble, and before he has been victimised by the habits that tend to make his life so unhealthy.

It occasionally happens in the summer time that club members obtain a short release from the dust-laden air of London by a Sunday outing. Conveyances can be hired at cheap rates for such a purpose,

or the local railway companies can be prevailed upon to issue cheap tickets and reserve compartments if the party be sufficiently numerous.

The club-man, too, has other methods of amusing himself. In another chapter enough was given by way of describing the variety entertainment. The ordinary club concert attains to about the same average of excellence or lack of excellence, and the dramatic performance is as a rule not more ambitious. The average cost of these entertainments is twenty-five shillings per show. This, more than anything else, will enable the reader to judge of the merits of these performances. But even this small sum is a great strain upon the resources of a club, especially when such entertainments are indulged in more than once a week. The penny programmes cannot be relied upon to cover expenses, since it is seldom that an audience of three hundred, or anything like that number, is attracted upon these occasions. Hence it follows that native talent is frequently substituted for a paid company, and evenings are often enlivened by songs and recitations from members themselves. On such occasions as these, proceedings may be regulated by a chairman, and conducted exactly in the same manner as an ordinary entertainment with paid performers.

Perhaps about the happiest idea in the way of entertainment is the children's party, which is organised in very many clubs at about Christmas time. The wives and children of members are invited to the club, which is profusely decorated in Christmas fashion with holly, evergreens, and wonderful designs in coloured paper. Hundreds of children appear on these occasions, and if there is not sufficient room for all on one night, two parties, on separate evenings, will be arranged. The hall is cleared for games, and very frequently the proceedings are enlivened by magic lantern displays. Refreshments, consisting of buns and ginger-beer, are

given to the children, many of whom regard the club-party as the most important day of the year.

The care and regularity with which these parties are arranged and carried out, the thoroughness with which everything is designed to attract and amuse the children, are sufficient to attest their popularity, and are an indication of the fact that the London workman has more domestic tastes than he is usually credited with. Entertainments in clubs owe their popularity and success largely to the fact that members can, and generally do, bring their wives with them on these occasions; even evening lectures at clubs are not infrequently attended by the wives of members as well as by the members themselves.

This fact tempts us, in conclusion, to touch upon a subject of considerable interest, and one which must be taken into consideration, when any attempt is made to measure the merits or demerits of club-life. The question of club-life and home-life has frequently been raised, not without good reason and sufficient justification. It has, however, been often dealt with in an unfair way, and from a point of view which is not justified under existing circumstances. Critics of the movement have often made the complaint, that clubs are the great stumbling-block in the way of the workman's home-life. It is urged that the ideal workman, when he has done his day's work, goes home and spends the evening with his wife and family. This, no doubt, is very true, but it should be remembered that the ideal workman, like the ideal everything else, is a rare being, possibly more rare still is the ideal wife and home. Even a model-dwelling ceases to be as ideal as it is sometimes supposed when it has to house a family of eight or nine. Here, as always, we must take things as we find them, and consider them from that point of view.

Now so many things have been urged against clubs in

this matter that we will confine ourselves to stating what may be said in their behalf.

It is quite true that the average London workman is disinclined to spend his evenings at home. The reasons for his disinclination are too obvious to need developing here. It is sufficient to call attention to two things. Firstly, if he remained at home, he would be adding one to a small, crowded, and ill-ventilated room. Secondly, by remaining at home, he would deprive himself of about the only opportunity afforded him during the twenty-four hours of quiet social intercourse with his friends. That this is an unfortunate state of things we readily admit. It is not, however, the fault of the workman, but of the system. As usual, he is the victim of circumstances. Since, then, the average workman is averse, and naturally averse, to spending his evenings at home under any circumstances, it seems rather unjust to make the clubs responsible in this matter. More especially is this the case when we remember that the alternative to the club is the public-house.

When once we have brought ourselves to realise the grave obstacles which render home-life difficult in the case of the London workman, we shall be able to realise how, in more ways than one, the club becomes considerably more than a mere substitute.

If a man, for instance, is a member of a club, his wife almost always knows where she may go to seek him if she wants him. The club will be near his home, and he will be easily reached. It is the commonest thing for the wives of members to appear at the club-door, and send a peremptory message by the porter. Usually the husband knows better than to disobey, and is marched off in triumph. No wife thinks twice about entering her husband's club for this purpose. She knows that she will be accommodated with a seat in the vestibule, and treated with the utmost civility and respect until her man appears. As likely as not she will pass the time in

a friendly chat with one of her husband's friends. Then again, if her husband is not at home, she usually has the satisfaction of knowing that he is spending his evening in a respectable place, and with respectable companions.

But this is not all. Club entertainments and evening lectures are frequently occurring—entertainments often taking place twice a week. On these occasions, as we have pointed out, the wife is almost always in her husband's company.

To so great an extent is this the case, that it amounts almost to an etiquette or ritual. We have known many cases when entertainments have been organised for workmen, apart from club-entertainments, and the invitation is almost invariably received in the same way—"Thank you sir—and are the ladies invited?" If they are not, the entertainment is more than likely to be a failure.

These considerations give the matter rather a different complexion.

It is wholly untrue to say that clubs have weaned men from home-life. The real causes, as we have shown, lie much deeper. All that the club does is of service rather than the reverse. It is a vast improvement on the public-house; it gives the wife an opportunity of easily finding her husband when she wants him, and it offers opportunities of frequent companionship between husband and wife which would otherwise be lacking.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

IF we have succeeded in emphasising the fact that the workmen of London and other places have realised and, to a certain extent, grappled with what we have called the Leisure Problem, we shall be content.

There is one consideration of great significance which should not escape us. It is this : that while the London workman has been engaged in the conflict waged against unjust and oppressive conditions of labour, he has, at the same time, been able to realise some of his own most serious faults, and that, having done so, he has made a determined effort to amend.

If anyone is of opinion that the London workman is content that his leisure should be spent in the public-house after the old fashion, the existence of the Club and Institute Union should be sufficient to confute him. Were such content as this universal, an organisation like the Club and Institute Union would be purposeless.

That this discontent is a reality is proved by the existence of the Union ; that it is deep-seated is shown by the greatness and completeness of the organisation. The nature of the discontent can be gauged if we compare what is offered to a workman by his club with what is offered to him by the public-house.

Lastly, and perhaps most important of all, that this is a real and natural discontent, and not the result of transitory missionary zeal, but is, as it were, the workman's *own idea*, is indicated by the fact that the Club and Institute Union began to flourish and to be felt

as a force, only when it was conducted on strictly democratic lines. The more it shook itself free of outside patronage and support, the more was its influence felt amongst the working classes, the more rapid and secure was its success.

Now, had this re-organisation on democratic lines been accompanied by a serious lowering of the moral standard in the clubs affiliated to the Union—if, in other words, they had fallen to the level of the public-houses—we should have been regretfully compelled to conclude that no effort to amend had been signalled by the club movement. Our object, in these pages, has been to show that no such lowering has taken place.

We have described these clubs exactly as we have found them ; we have shown where they are strong and where they are weak ; if we have called attention to their excellencies we have exposed and censured their deficiencies. We have done our best to make it clear that to confound these institutions with public-houses, or to imply that they are to be condemned as illegitimate places of amusement, is to be guilty either of ignorance or of wilful injustice. It has occasionally happened in the thirty years' history of the Union, that certain clubs have proved traitors to the hopes and aims of the promoters of this movement. But a critic who condemns the Club and Institute Union on such a ground as this will find himself awkwardly placed as a critic of other institutions, for none will stand acquitted in his eyes.

In order to estimate properly the value and significance of this movement, we should take into full consideration the conditions and circumstances of its growth and existence.

In spite of poverty, in spite of opposition, in spite of the severest temptations to relapse, this struggle to secure for the working classes a leisure free from the public-house taint, and one giving scope for various useful

interests and activities, has silently progressed through thirty years, and has extended itself throughout the United Kingdom.

When one realizes, as many fail to do, the strong and cruel bondage that these men have silently striven to shake off; how, ever conscious of their weakness, they have combined to rid themselves of that taint; how, in spite of frequent failures and constant back-slidings, they have steadily persevered, the strong pathos of this struggle dawns upon one, and one realises the cynical cruelty of identifying with this movement those associations which, against terrible odds, have been, and are being, honestly combated.

It will not be amiss here to refer once more to the ideals and aspirations which were made articulate by this discontent.

Speaking at the Annual Meeting of the Club and Institute Union on September 22nd, 1894, Mr Hodgson Pratt, the president of the Union, after referring to the great sphere in politics occupied by labour problems, and making special reference to the recent Trades Union Congress, said: "It may be asked why I refer to all this, and to other great questions of social transformation. My reason for doing so is that I wish to indicate the position which your club movement occupies in reference to the other organisations which exist in this country for the welfare of the mass of the people. To put my meaning in the clearest words possible, I would say that while political leagues, trade-union, and co-operative societies are formed for definite action, the clubs have been formed, in great measure, to educate men for that action, as well as for the general duties of citizenship. You will at once perceive that I attach a very large meaning to that word 'education.' Indeed, I hold that these clubs are to fulfil the function intended by the founders of this Union—that of qualifying the whole club world for their share in directing the legislation of

this country ; for determining the conditions under which their labour shall be conducted ; for deciding all questions which affect the demand and supply of labour and capital as well as the relation of population to the means of its support ; and the command of foreign as well as home markets."

We would draw attention to the fact that the idea of recreation pure and simple is not here excluded. Mr Pratt's object was to indicate the position which the club movement "occupies in reference to the other organisations which exist in this country." And we should notice that he says, "the clubs have been formed, *in great measure*, to educate men for the general duties of citizenship."

The more fundamental and subtle conception is brought out further on. He points out that it is in his leisure hours that a man has the real opportunity of forming definite opinions of his own, and of determining the tone and colour of his thought and life. He would make men understand how important to them their leisure is in this respect, how much depends upon its use or abuse. Independence of thought and life must be striven for, and in achieving this independence, in assisting this opportunity, the Union is a powerful factor. He proceeds : "That is one of the reasons why this Union was founded. We believe that the leisure hours of a man's life are those in which he forms his mind, his judgment, and his conscience. So long as those leisure hours were passed in public-houses, he was surrounded by influences prejudicial to that higher education to which I have referred. We did not ignore the existence of the home, but we recognised the plain fact that vast numbers of workmen do not and cannot spend their whole leisure there, any more than richer men. We further recognise the fact that a citizen's education must, in some measure, be formed through association with his fellows. We believe that in the club, as compared with the public-

house, the education of the citizen would be carried on advantageously, and if so, that our movement would be of great value to the nation at large."

These are high ideals. The important question to be asked is, are they to-day the mainsprings of this movement? Is the management and conduct of the Union in harmony with such ideals? In answering this question we must compare the aspirations and conduct of the Club and Institute Union with the aspirations and conduct of other institutions. We will find that all institutions, in actual practice, fall far short of their ideals. The Union is not peculiar in this respect. It is the fate common to all. The question rather is, How far has the Club and Institute Union *approximated* to such ideals? If the answer is favourable, we may yet assert that the ideals of Mr Hodgson Pratt and his fellow-workers are still the mainsprings of the movement.

We said just now, referring to the re-organisation of the Union on democratic lines, that if such re-organisation had been accompanied by a serious lowering of the moral standard in the clubs affiliated to the Union—if, that is to say, they had fallen to the level of the public-houses—we should have been compelled to conclude that no effort in the direction of amelioration had been signalized by the club movement. The purpose of this book has been to point out that an approximation to the original standards of excellence which inspired its founders, has through the vicissitudes of its growth and development never been absent in the history of this movement. Suppose, for instance, that the club movement had never been started, and that workmen had spent their leisure in the public-house, would anyone have claimed that, under such circumstances, the workman's leisure could ever have been practically regarded as an opportunity for educational development. Obviously not; for as Mr Pratt justly observes, so long as those leisure hours were passed in public-houses, the

workman was surrounded by influences prejudicial to that higher education to which he had referred.

We cannot insist too strongly upon the fact that, since the democratic re-organisation of the Union—that is to say, since the workmen themselves undertook its management and direction—the prosperity of the Union has increased, and that its extended prosperity has in no sense been accompanied with a failure to approximate to the ideals of its founders.

Mr Pratt, as president of the Union, affords us ample testimony to the truth of this statement, as the following passage from the address referred to will prove. “I desire,” he says, “to express my belief that a large proportion of the many thousand persons who have been members of your clubs during the last thirty years have, in consequence, become more useful and better qualified for their duty at the polling booth, and more efficient members of various organisations. This, indeed, is no small thing to have achieved. In the solution of the weighty problems that are near at hand, the clubs will provide an ever-increasing number of men able to appreciate and decide upon those problems. Can I bear stronger testimony to the value of the clubs and their Union?”

Here we get an estimate as to how far an approximation to the ideals of its founders has been achieved. It is no mean approximation, but one that justifies the ideals which inspired, and still inspire, the movement. Here, surely, we have evidence that the London workman has been able to criticise his own short-comings; that he has been moved by a discontent and a misgiving which forced him to realise that the public-house, an excellent thing in itself, was not his sole refuge; that there was a dignity attached to his existence which made him understand that his leisure must not be thrown away.

The Club and Institute Union has a special and peculiar

interest of its own in so far as its position is unique in workmen's organisations. Trades' Unions, Political Leagues, Friendly and Co-operative Societies are formed in order to achieve some fixed and definite purpose. Collectively their possibilities are great; individually they exist in order to actualize a certain aim. In their case there is no temptation towards sporadic developments. Their operations are conditioned by the definiteness of their objects. But in the case of the Club and Institute Union the same cannot be said. The aim of this organisation is broader and more general. Its proceedings admit of a greater variety; its enterprise is less determined and suggestive of more varied possibilities. Its purpose is more vague and general. Its object is to afford the workman a new possibility by converting his leisure hours into a great opportunity. It should be, and is, the means of rendering other workman's organisations more effective by affording them a better chance of success. But this characteristic is its weakness as well as its strength. Where the methods are less defined, the chances of failure are more numerous. It is an organisation which admits of great possibilities, but of possibilities in two directions. The fact that the Union has risen superior to the dangers suggested gives it a claim to more than ordinary commendation.

It has been tried by tests of more than ordinary severity, and, in estimating its failures or successes, this should not be lost sight of or ignored.

This broadness of aim which naturally belongs to an institution such as this, is attested by the multiplicity of its pursuits. We have had occasion to draw attention to its classes, its lectures, its libraries, its prize competitions (both educational and recreative), and its debates. We have described its methods of amusement; the games organised in the clubs, the Saturday visits, the Sunday outings, the billiard, whist, and cribbage competitions,

the athletic contests, the concerts and entertainments. We have pointed out that many clubs organise provident societies and other useful associations. We have shown how political clubs are a force to be reckoned with in local politics, how their work is especially valuable when elections are in progress. It should not be lost sight of that such activities as these are promoted by corporate action, and that in spite of the miscellaneous nature of these pursuits a sense of unity and combination is everywhere the leading motive and a powerful incentive. A striking illustration of this is afforded by the two latest achievements of the Union. The new hall and its connected meeting-rooms are the result of the combined effort and sacrifices of the Union and the clubs belonging to it. The Convalescent Home is the second illustration. Club-men had realised the usefulness of such an institution as this for invalided members, and steps were taken to effect its erection and management. In this last undertaking the clubs were fortunate enough to secure the kind assistance of Mr Passmore Edwards, who generously offered to present to the Union land and buildings on a suitable site. Pegwell Bay was the selected spot, and he acquired the premises lately used as the Clifton Hotel. This building contains twenty-five bedrooms, games' rooms, dining-rooms and others, and was decorated and put into repair by Mr Passmore Edwards.

But the clubs themselves had not been idle. Upwards of five hundred pounds has been contributed by them to defray furnishing and other expenses, principally those of maintenance, and other sums are being received from the same sources.

Such sacrifices made for a common object are all the more to be commended when we remember that these institutions are *workmen's* clubs, and as such must be managed on lines of strictest economy, in order that their very existence may be secured.

It will be seen, then, that the weaknesses of this move-

ment, where they exist, are, to a great extent, consistent with the nature of its constitution, its work and objects. It is from this point of view that they should be regarded, and it is from this point of view that they should be censured.

What those weaknesses are, we have given our readers every opportunity of discovering ; we have also pointed out that there exists a great tendency to exaggerate these deficiencies, especially in cases when the charge brought forward is that of intemperance.

Everyone, of course, regrets that any misconduct should occur, and everyone, very justly, censures it when it does occur. But there are two very different forms of censure ; there is the reckless blame of one who sees and appreciates nothing but the faults themselves, and there is the tempered and more rational censure of those who see the faults, but see them in their proper perspective, and are able to make reasonable allowances.

Approaching the matter in this spirit, we have found that, in spite of everything, in spite of short-comings incidental to an organisation of this sort, there is much room for praise. The last, and perhaps the strongest, point of all, is that the club movement, as typified by the Club and Institute Union, is, essentially, of and belonging to the people themselves. Broadly speaking, they have conceived and executed the idea themselves. The more democratic its management has become, the more striking has been its success. Nor, in spite of this development, have the old ideals been lost sight of.

This movement, indeed, if any, has an interest and significance of its own.

Those who are interested in the development of the working classes have here the opportunity of scrutinizing an interesting little phase in that development. They have the opportunity of watching the proceedings of thousands of workmen who are attempting to solve a problem in their own way. They have taken a certain

matter into their own hands, and are quietly doing their best to arrange it. They are not looking for much encouragement or advice from outside, because they know that in many quarters their proceedings are discountenanced. Nevertheless they are going on in their own way. They know the difficulties which encompass them, because they know that it is a delicate thing to *improve* a man's leisure without spoiling it. They know that the inherent difficulties in such an attempt will frequently give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme.

Being fully conscious of the weakness of their position they expect a certain amount of criticism; but they wince when they meet with unjust condemnation. The fact that they find it difficult to answer an unfair imputation makes them all the more sensitive. There are some, however, who realise that, in this undertaking, their weakness is their strength. They have attempted to do that which no one else has attempted, and in a way all their own—that constitutes their strength, as well as their weakness.

This movement owes its success to men who have, more than anyone else, felt the pulses of their fellow-workers, and have divined something therefrom.

They have discovered a certain discontent which was the result of a self-accusation, and they have done their best to provide the proper treatment for the case.

In this matter, the working classes have consulted, mainly, doctors from their own ranks.

Meantime, it is interesting to watch their methods of treatment and to note results. It is in reality no insignificant case, for these men have begun to grapple with the great leisure problem

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